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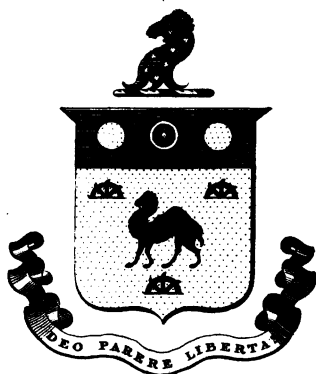
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2 vols.



George Wheeler.

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George Wheeler

29th September 1831

THE
JERUSALEM DELIVERED

OF
TORQUATO TASSO.

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH SPENSERIAN VERSE,

WITH
A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR:

BY
J. H. WIFFEN.

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JERUSALEM DELIVERED.

CANTO X.





Stanza xv.

ARGUMENT.

BEFORE the Soldan, as he sleeps, Ismene
 Presents himself, and secretly conveys
 The Prince to Sion, where his courage keen,
 And the unbending firmness he displays,
 Soon cheers the drooping Tyrant; Godfrey prays
 Of his stray knights the story of their woes;
 And when the fear which on his spirit preys
 For lost Rinaldo finds a happy close,
 His sons' renown and worth the gifted Seer foreshews.

JERUSALEM DELIVERED.

CANTO X.

I.

WHILST yet he spoke, a steed from battle strayed,
Came bounding up to him, on whose free rein
A hot and hasty hand the Soldan laid,
And leaped across him, faint with toil and pain :
The dragon crest, that with such length of train
Of late in air rose dreadful, shorn away,
Leaves the proud helm undignified and plain ;
Rent are his glorious robes, his trappings gay ;
Nor has he left one sign of pomp or kingly sway.

II.

As from the wattled pens the villain wolf
Chased out, scuds darkling to the forests hoar,
Which, though he well has filled the ravenous gulf
Of his vast stomach with the flesh and gore
Of many a victim, thirsting yet for more,
Laps off the bloody froth his jaws distil,
With greedy tongue ; e'en so the Soldan bore
From that night's slaughter an unsated will,
For boundless fields of blood athirst and hungering still.

III.

As was his fortune, from the drizzly cloud
Of sounding arrows that around him flew,
From groves of lances, ranks of swords, a crowd
Of hostile knights, securely he withdrew ;
And ever as he rode, unknown to view,
The most untrod and wildest ways he sought ;
Whilst, unresolved what measure to pursue,
With each fresh billow of conflicting thought,
Fluctuates his stormy mind, still fixing, fixed on nought.

IV.

At length to Egypt he resolved to hie,
Where now the Caliph his vast hosts arrayed;
And, joined with him, the arms and fate to try
Of a fresh conflict; this decision made,
In his mid course no longer he delayed,
But with the speed his urgency demands,
Rode for the South; he needed none in aid,
To shew the way where on the seashore sands,
Right strongly towered, the town of antique Gaza stands.

V.

Nor, though sharp pangs upon his members seize,
And his weak frame grows weary, will he lay
His arms aside to taste the bliss of ease,
But in sore travel spends the total day,
Till from his sight the landscape swims away,
And shadows tinge the sky's sweet colours brown;
He then alights; then swathes, as best he may,
His thrilling wounds; and from the lofty crown
Of overnodding palms ambrosial fruit shakes down.

VI.

And, thus refreshed, on the bare earth he sought,
His head reclining on his shield, to gain
Rest to his wearied side, and still the thought,
The restless thought that tired his busy brain:
But every moment miserable pain
Stung the sick slumberer on his couch of thorn;
Oft a swift horror shot from vein to vein;
Whilst by the inward vultures, Grief and Scorn,
His sad heart still was pierced, his liver fiercely torn.

VII.

At length, when Night had reached her deepest noon,
And lulled in solemn trance all things around,
Conquered with weariness, in softest swoon
His vexing memories and regrets he drowned:
Brief languid quiet his shut eyelids crowned,
And a benumbing torpor, dull but dear,
Its soothing coils about his members wound;—
Whilst yet he slept, a sudden voice severe,
Toned like the thunder, thus resounded in his ear:

VIII.

"Solyman! Solyman! this lazy rest
To a more suited time reserve; still groans
The land thou' hast ruled—a weeping slave, oppressed
Beneath the yoke of foreign myrmidons:
And sleep'st thou here, upon a soil that owns
So deep a vestige of thy late disgrace?
Hast thou the sad remembrance lost, whose bones
Untombed it holds? is it in such a place
That thou must idly wait to give the morning chase?"

IX.

The Soldan, waking, raised his eyes, and viewed
A man beneath a hundred winters bent;
Who, with a writhen staff from the wild wood,
Guided his feeble steps where'er he went:
"And who art thou?" he uttered, malcontent,
"Officious goblin! whose ill ministry
Is—thus to haunt lone passengers o'erspent,
And scare off their brief sleeps? take wing, and flee!
What is my proud revenge, what my disgrace to thee!"

X.

"I," said the bearded Sire, "am one to whom
Is known in part the scope of your new scheme;
And as a friend more watchful of your doom
And cherished interests than you yet may deem,
I come; nor let my bitter sarcasm seem
Severe in vain; scorn is the quickening spur
Of virtue and ennobling self-esteem;
Let not my accents then, which serve to stir
The latent fire to flame, your anger thus incur.

XI.

"Though now (if I your purpose read aright)
Your steps to the Egyptian Court incline,
A dangerous journey and a fruitless flight,
If yet you pause not in your rash design,
My mystic art, from many a hostile sign,
Predicts; since, whether you remain or go,
No less the forces of the Saracine
Will march; and there, what valour can you shew,
Or how your genius use against our common foe?

XII.

"But, if you trust to me, within those walls
Which fast the Latin arms in leaguer gird,
In open day, and to the inmost halls
Of Salem, without sword, I pledge my word
To bring you safe, unnoticed and unheard;
There take your fill of glory and delight;
With arms and zeal to fit exploits transferred,
Defend her towers, till, to renew the fight,
The hosts of Egypt come, and conquest crowns your right!"

XIII.

Whilst thus he spoke, the fierce Turk with amaze
The ancient man's electric aspect eyed;
His voice was like a spell; and from his face,
And from his savage mind all signs of pride
And rage he banished: "Father!" he replied,
"This instant I am ready, I am swift
To follow wheresoe'er thy will may guide;
That counsel's best which promises to lift
My steps with most of toil to Danger's loftiest clift!"

XIV.

The Ancient praised his zeal, and straightway poured
Into his smarting wounds, which Night had chilled,
A sovereign juice that soon his strength restored,
Stanch'd the red ichor, the sore bruises healed;
And, seeing now the sun begin to gild
The orient clouds yet purple from their play
Round young Aurora, "Rise from off thy shield!"
He said, "'t is time to go; since breaking day,
Which calls the world to toil, already lights our way."

XV.

His magic Car stood ready at command,—
They mount; the Stranger, shunning all delay,
Shook the rich reins, and with a master's hand
Lashed the black steeds, that, ramping, scoured away
So swift, that not the sands a trace betray
Of hoof or wheel; they vanish as they come,
Proudly precipitant, and snort, and neigh,
Paw the parched soil, and, ardent for their home,
Champ their resplendent bits all white with fleecy foam.

XVI.

Away! away! and still as fast and far
They fly, the air to clouds condensing rolled
In heaps around, and draped the' enchanted car,
Yet not a wreath could human eye behold;
Nor stone nor rock, (surprising to be told,)
Hurled from the most magnificent machine,
Might of its crapelike volume pierce the fold!
Yet by the two within were all things seen —
The clouds, air, earth, and sky, all rosilv serene.

XVII.

With wrinkling forehead and arched brow, the knight
On cloud and car gazed stupidly intent, —
Its wheels seemed wings, and its career a flight,
So swift and soundless on its way it went
O'er the smooth soil; the Sage plenipotent,
Who saw his raptured spirit stand aghast
At the sublime and mystical portent,
From his abstraction roused him; voice at last
Came to his lips, from which these eager questions passed.

XVIII.

"Whoe'er thou art that, passing mortal man,
Mak'st pliant Nature thus thy freaks fulfil,
Who, reading thought and purpose at a scan,
The heart's close chambers rangest at thy will,
O! if it be within thy gifted skill,
Far peeping into Time, to see the shows
Of things yet dark, and spell their good or ill,
Say, prophet! say, what ruin or repose
Do the mysterious stars foredoom from Asia's throes.

XIX.

"But first thy name declare, and by what art
Thou work'st things thus beyond weak Fancy's reach;
For, in this stupor of the mind and heart,
How else can I attend thy wondrous speech?"
The Wizard smiled; "Of that which you beseech,
Part I, at least," said he, "will grant; one page
We may turn over, and its secrets teach;
Ismeno I, the Syrian Archimage,
Named from the magic arts in which I love to' engage.

XX.

"But, Prince, to glance through dark futurity,
 And of far fate the' eternal leaves to read,
 Were an attempt too arrogant and high,
 Nor do the Heavens to man such power concede :
 To face the ills and sufferings here decreed;
 All spirit, wisdom, strength, let each assume ;
 For oft the valorous and the wise succeed
 In striking brightness from the deepest gloom,
 And from the spheres shape out their own triumphant doom.

XXI.

"For thee 't will be a little thing, the powers
 And pillars of Frank rule to shake ; prepare
 Not to flank only, nor to shield the towers,
 Which those fierce hosts with such unceasing care
 Strongly enclose,—'gainst steel,—'gainst fire lay bare
 Thine all unconquerable arm ; be bold ;
 Hope all things, suffer all things, all things dare ;
 Myself hope much ; to thee shall now be told,
 What through the mist of years obscurely I behold.

XXII.

"I seem to see, ere many an annual round
 Yon dancing planet runs, a Chief arise,
 Who shall grace Asia with his deeds renowned,
 And with the sceptre of the Ptolemies
 Rule fruitful Egypt ; on the policies,
 Industrious arts, and blessings of his reign,
 I 'am mute,—their number pains my straining eyes :
 This be content to know, the Christian chain
 With equal scorn and strength his hand shall shake in twain.

XXIII.

"Yea ! from its very base their rule unjust
 Shall in his last proud field uprooted be ;
 And the lone remnant for their safety trust
 A petty rock beside the howling sea,
 Protected only by its waves ; from thee
 This Chief shall spring !" here hushed the prophet's voice :
 "And O !" the Turk replied, " thrice happy he,
 Destined to such a noble task !" the choice
 His vulture thoughts half grudge, yet, whilst they grudge,
 rejoice.

XXIV.

"Let Fortune," he subjoined, "for good or ill
Come or come not, as is prescribed on high,
She sways not me, but shall behold my will
Unconquered aye, and stedfast as the sky :
First shall the moon from her blue circuit fly ;
First shall the stars' immortal footsteps reel
From the path fixed for them to tread, ere I
Swerve but a step to shun her whirling wheel !"
He said, and crimson turned, with scorn and fervent zeal.

XXV.

Thus commune they ; and now the plain they pass,
Near which their domes the white pavilions rear ;
There what a cruel sight was seen ! alas,
In what unnumbered shapes did death appear !
To Solyman's stern eyes a troubled tear
Of grief and passion rose at the survey,
And filled his face with gloom ; afar and near,
In what wild havoc, how insulted, lay
His arms and ensigns, feared, so feared of yesterday !

XXVI.

He saw the Franks in carnival o'erspread
The field, oft trampling on the faces pale
Of his slain friends, as from the' unburied dead
They tore the gorgeous vests and shirts of mail,
With rude insulting taunts : down the far vale,
In long, long order, many a funeral quire
Was seen attending with the voice of wail
Bodies beloved, whilst some brought careless fire,
And Turks and Arabs heaped in one commingling pyre.

XXVII.

He deeply sighed, he drew his sword in rage,
And from his seat leaped, eager in their blood
To' avenge the insult ; but the Archimage
His mad resolve inflexibly withstood ;
And, curbing by rebuke his furious mood,
Made him perforce resume the seat resigned ;
Then to the loftiest hills his course pursued,
Baffling the rival pinions of the wind,
Until the hostile tents in distance sank behind.

XXVIII.

Alighting then, the chariot disappeared,
And side by side on foot the travellers went ;
Still curtained in the cloud, their course they steered
Down a deep vale of difficult descent,
Till they arrived where to the Occident
Sublime Mount Sion turned its shoulders wide,
In rocks and cliffs fantastically rent ;
There paused the Sorcerer, and its fissured side
Coasting from steep to steep, in close perusal eyed.

XXIX.

Scooped in the bosom of the living stone,
Time immemorial, yawns a hollow grot,
Whose mouth, from long disuse, was overgrown
With briars and herbs that mantled all the spot,
By all but the Magician long forgot ;
He cleared the way, the entrance he explored,
And, bending low his body, scrupled not
Darkling to creep into the cave, unawed,
Holding his right hand out to guide the Turkish lord.

XXX.

Out then spake Solyman ; " What uncouth cave
Is this, through which my stealing steps must glide ?
Far nobler passage with my trusty glaive
Would I have cleft, if thou hadst not denied :
" Reluctant soul ! " the Archimage replied,
" Let not thy proud feet spurn the gloomy ways
Which potent Herod has so often tried,—
Which Herod oft-times trod in ancient days,
Whose deeds in arms are yet the theme of Syrian praise.

XXXI.

" This cave the monarch scooped, when with a power
More strict his froward Jews he wished to bend ;
By this he could with ease from yonder tower,
(Then named Antonia from his noble friend,)
Either, invisible to all descend
To the grand Temple, and secure his flight,
If aught of tumult threatened to impend
In the rebellious city, or, by night
Fresh forces introduce, nor shock the public sight.

XXXII.

"This dark and solitary cave, of all
Existent beings but to me is known;
It now shall be our usher to the hall,
Where in divan the mightiest of his throne,
Emir, and sage, and Persic Amazon
Are gathered by the King, who seems to fear,
Somewhat too much, misfortune's angry frown;
Much needed shalt thou come; stand still, give ear,
Then move, at suited time, bold words of lively cheer."

XXXIII.

He said: the Prince no longer now disdains
To enter the strange cavern; but by ways
Where ever-during night, and silence reigns,
Follows the Wizard through the winding maze;
At first low stooping, but the grot in space
Loftier dilates, the farther they explore
Its labyrinthine depths, until they pace
At utmost ease of height the chiselled floor,
And midway soon approach a little grated door.

XXXIV.

Ismeno shot the lock; and to the right
They climbed a staircase, long untrod, to which
A feeble, glimmering, and malignant light
Streamed from the ceiling through a windowed niche;
At length by corridors of loftier pitch
They sallied into day, and access had
To an illumined hall, large, round, and rich;
Where, sceptred, crowned, and in dark purple clad,
Sad sat the pensive King, amidst his Nobles sad.

XXXV.

The Turk, unseen within the hollow cloud,
His eager eyes around the assembly rolled;
And heard meanwhile the monarch, from his proud
Enamelled seat of elephant and gold,
His changed imaginations thus unfold;
"Oh, ruinous indeed the day gone by
Proved to our rule! my eagle heart is cold;
Cold, O my friends! and, cast from hopes so high,
Egypt is now the all on which we can rely.

XXXVI.

" But well ye see how distant are her arms
From our so pressing exigence, alas,
Our risks ! for your advice in these alarms
We all are met,—each speak the thoughts he has :"
He ceased ; sad sounds around repining pass,
Like hollow winds in woods when dark the year
Weeps into winter ; but, with front of brass,
Lively of look and confident of cheer,
Argantes straight uprose, and hushed each whispering peer.

XXXVII.

" What, most magnificent of Kings ! what now ?"
Were the first words of the undaunted Knight ;
" What trial 's this ? who does not know, that thou
Need'st not our judgments to decide aright ?
Yet will I say, be all our hopes in fight
Placed in ourselves ; and if, as schoolmen tell,
No ills can harm true Virtue, nor affright,
Be that our spear, our shield, our citadel,—
Let us her dictates use, nor love our lives too well.

XXXVIII.

" I say not this as hopeless of the aid,
The most sure aid our Court did late decree ;
To doubt the promises my lord has made,
Were neither just in you, nor right in me :
But this I say, because I wish to see
In some of us an energy more brave ;
A soul prepared for whatsoe'er may be—
To scorn the chance that guides us to the grave,
And look on victory still as our predestined slave."

XXXIX.

Thus spoke Argantes ; nothing more he chose
To say, as useless in so clear a case ;
When with an air of state Orcano rose,
A peer descended from a princely race :
With warriors once he held respected place ;
But, married to a young and beauteous bride,
His courage melted in her sweet embrace ;
And in his babes now placing his chief pride,
Sad o'er the risks of war the sire and husband sighed.

XL.

"My Prince," he thus began, "I ne'er can blame
The warmth of words magnificent, that start
Bright with the impress of young Glory's flame,
Which will not be confined in the close heart;
And if the good Circassian, in the smart
Of ardent feeling, oft in speech exceeds
Cool caution's bounds and overplays his part,
This let him claim; for, hotly as he pleads,
His glorying words are matched by no less glorious deeds.

XLI.

"But it behoves thee, whom the wider ken
Of times and actions so discreet has made,
Such spirits by thy wisdom to restrain,
When by enthusiast heat too far betrayed;
To balance with thy hopes of distant aid
Our present perils—what may yet befall,—
And to contrast, in this their fierce crusade,
The arms, the zeal, the genius of the Gaul,
With each new builded work and immemorial wall.

XLII.

"Our town (if freely I may speak my thought)
Is strong by nature, stronger yet by art;
But what sublime and strong machines are brought
Against its bulwarks, on the adverse part!
What is to happen, I know not,—my heart
Both hopes and fears the issue, as the scale
Vibrates of war; but hope must soon depart,
Hope must depart, for sustenance will fail,
If they in stricter siege invest us, and assail.

XLIII.

"But, as respects the store of herds and grain
That yesternight within the walls was brought,
Whilst the preste Franks, in yon pavilioned plain
Crimsoning their swords, on conquest only thought,
(And at the greatest hazard it was wrought,)
What will it be in this large town? at most,
Scant for our need, if the siege lasts; nor short
The siege must prove, e'en though the Egyptian host
Come punctual to the day and hour at first proposed.

XLIV.

"But what, if longer they delay? or grant
That they our hopes outstrip, and well fulfil
Their plighted promise, is there nought to daunt?
Is the war-storm rolled back from Zion hill?
Is victory ours?—No, King! we must fight still
With this redoubted Godfrey, as at first;
With the same captains, the same hosts, whose skill
So oft has baffled the fair hopes we nursed,
And Arabs, Persians, Turks, in utter rout dispersed!

XLV.

"Their bravery, brave Argantes! thou hast known,
Who oft in field hast yielded quick retreat,
Oft to the conquering foe thy shoulders shewn,
Oft turned for safety to thy wind-swift feet:
Coupled with thee in danger and defeat,
This knows Clorinda, this know I; not one
In the divan has cause for self-conceit
Above the rest; my lord, I censure none;
All that the might of man can do, ourselves have done.

XLVI.

"Yet will I say, though he should frown to hear
The truth, and fiercely take the dues of hate,
I see, alas, by tokens but too clear,
The dreaded Franks led onward by a fate
Not to be shunned! no force, however great,
Nor harnesses of steel, nor towers of stone
Will bar their final conquest; this I state,
(Bear witness, righteous Heaven!) from zeal alone,—
Zeal for my country's good, and duty to the throne.

XLVII.

"How wise the King of Tripoli! he knew
How with calm peace his kingdom to retain;
Whilst by his stubbornness the Soldan drew
Their vengeance down, and either now lies slain,
Or vilely groans beneath the victor's chain;
Or into exile, of each face afraid,
Flies, ekeing out a life of care and pain;
He too, had he but yielded part, and paid
Tribute or gifts of price, might still his realms have swayed."

XLVIII.

In these ambiguous words the Syrian gave
A dubious glimpse of his oblique device;
For, to buy peace and live a feudal slave
He durst not openly the king advise:
But the impetuous Solyman of Nice,
With deepest scorn and indignation stung,
No longer could endure such calumnies;
And first the Wizard whispered him, "How long
Art thou disposed to bear the taunts of such a tongue?"

XLIX.

"Against my will," he answered, "well you wist,
Keep I thus mute; I burn with rage and scorn!"
Scarce had he said, than the gross web of mist
That like a garment mantled them, was torn,
And into open heaven dissolving borne;
At once refulgent from the rending cloud
The Prince stood forth in the clear light of morn;
With fiery eye, magnificent and proud,—
Into the hall he strode, and sudden spake aloud:

L.

"Lo, I of whom ye prate, before you stand,
No timorous wretch that into exile flies,
But ready e'en with this war-wearied hand,
To prove how foully yon pale craven lies!
And is it I, who shed—in all men's eyes,
Such streams of blood; who fought, the livelong night,
Till the smooth plain did into mountains rise,—
I, who with thousands still sustained the fight,
Of every friend deprived—am I accused of flight?"

LI.

"But mark me well! if he, or any such,
False to his faith, his country, and his kind,
Dares on so base a theme again to touch,
This sword shall stab the mischief in his mind:
First lambs and wolves shall in one fold be joined;
First doves and snakes shall in one nest embrace;
Ere on one soil affianced peace shall bind
Our hands in friendship with this hated race;
No! first the stable globe shall perish from its place."

LII.

Whilst speaking, he his terrible right hand
Laid on his sword in threatful attitude;
As statues mute, the Magnates of the land
Sate, by his words and Gorgon face subdued:
Then with a gentler tone, in milder mood,
He greeted courteously the King, and said;
"No more, my lord, on past reverses brood,
Since I am here, who bring no trivial aid;
Let this to livelier hopes thy fainting heart persuade."

LIII.

He, rising to salute him, made reply;
"Oh with what joy do I behold thee here!
Now, neither of my slaughtered chivalry
Feel I the loss, nor for the future fear;
Thou of a truth art come, companion dear!
My power to fix, and in good time renew—
Unless the flattering stars prove insincere—
Thine own;" thus saying, to the Prince he drew,
And round his neck his arms in strict embracement threw.

LIV.

Their greetings paid, his own rich chair of state
The King conceded to the brave Nicene;
Then on a damask throne beside him sate,
And on his left hand placed the sage Ismene:
Whilst of their wondrous coming unforeseen
Curious the King for explanation pressed
The Archimage apart, Clorinda sheen
Came from her seat, and to the royal guest
Respectful homage paid; him honouring, rose the rest:

LV.

And with them brave Ormusses, who, endued
Of late by Solyman with powers to guide
A troop of Arabs to the town, pursued
Ways long disused, and whilst the fight was plied
With sternest resolution, undescried
Through the dark midnight, had the skill to gain
The straitened town in safety; and beside
His armed force, brought store of herds and grain;
Aids, which the pining host had looked for long in vain.

LVI.

Sole with an aspect full of surly scorn,
Silent the piqued Circassian kept his place ;
Like a grim lion, that at sound of horn
Rolling his eyes, disdains to stir one pace :
Abashed Orcano durst not e'en upraise
His eyes ; but, pricked by Shame's compunctuous sting,
Shrunk from his wronged opponent's angry gaze :
The Soldan thus and nobles in a ring
Leave we in deep divan, around the Syrian King.

LVII.

But Godfrey, following fast as victory led,
Had cleared the ambushed straits, the guarded heights ;
And paid meanwhile to his lamented dead
The last funereal pomps and pious rites :
And now he gives command that all his knights
Be ready, when the matin trumpet calls,
To move the' assault ; their ardour he incites ;
And wheeling round, in prospect of the walls,
Yet mightier rams and towers, the townsmen more appals.

LVIII.

And when he knew the noble troop that came
In the last fight so timely to his aid
For his own knights, who, through their amorous flame,
Had followed late the fair insidious maid,—
And with them Tancred, whom we saw betrayed
To powerless bondage in Armida's cage,
After his fancied Lady as he strayed,—
Alone before the Solitary Sage
And his chief friends, he sent, their presence to engage.

LIX.

Soon as they came, "Let one of you," he said,
"Of your brief wanderings the events relate ;
And by what turn of fortune you were led
To bring such succour in so sharp a strait :"
They blushed ; since, e'en for venial errors, great
Is the remorse of virtue ; each would shun
The task, and downcast stood with looks sedate :
Raising his eyes at length, the' illustrious son
Of British William rose, and bashful thus begun.

LX.

"We, whose void lots remained undrawn, whilst night
Favoured us, secretly from camp withdrew;
Following, I not deny, Love's meteor light,
And a fair face insidious to undo;
We went by crooked byways, trod by few,
In discord, jealousy; and fierce debate;
And oft the witch impassioned glances threw,
Sweet words, and sweeter smiles; (seen through too late!)
Which, whilst they fed our love, increased our mutual hate.

LXI.

"At length we reached the' accursed spot, where Heaven
Rained down its flaky fire in ancient time,
Revenging outraged Nature on the leaven
Of foul Gomorrah and her coasts of crime:
Once fruitful was the land, and pure the clime;
Where odious winds now fret, and billows yell,
Rolled on a wild lagoon of bubbling slime
Bituminous, that, smoking as they swell,
Breathe in gross air the hue and sulphurous scent of hell.

LXII.

"This is the pool in which whate'er is thrown
Will never sink, but on the surface float;
Men, iron, marble, brass, and solid stone,
All that has weight, is buoyed up as a boat:
A castle crowns the flood, and o'er its moat
A narrow bridge gives access to the pile;
Thither we went; within, sweet mysteries smote
Our senses,—Nature wore her brightest smile;
Gay shone the summer sea, and laughed the'enchanted isle.

LXIII.

"The air was mild, heaven calm, the joyous bowers
Fresh, the woods green, the waters bright and blue;
Midst myrtles, lilachs, and divinest flowers,
A fountain to the sun in silver flew;
The crisp leaves made soft music, as to woo
Tired eyes to slumber in the shaded grass;
Heard was the bee to hum, the dove to coo,
Nor mute was heavenly Philomel; I pass
The glorious structures wrought in marble, gold, and glass.

LXIV.

" On the smooth turf, near the melodious wave,
In brownest shade were ivory tables set;
With sculptured vases decked and viands brave
Of every clime and season,—all that yet
Art dressed, or taste purveyed, or rifling net
Snared from the leafy wood or billowy sound,
With every flavorful wine and rich sherbet;
A hundred charming nymphs, with roses crowned,
Skilful as Hebe, served, and sped the banquet round.

LXV.

" With radiant smiles and fond engaging speech
She brewed enchantments fatal to our fame;
Whilst at the feast, from Love's full goblet, each
Quaffed off a long forgetfulness to shame,
She, rising, said, " I soon return;" she came,—
But with a face less tranquil than before;
Her cheek's rose-hues were deepened into flame;
A small enchanting wand her right hand bore,
Her left a book, whence she strange mysteries murmured o'er.

LXVI.

" Fast as she read, I felt a secret change
Invest at once volition, sense, and thought;
I longed the watery element to range,
Leaped from my seat, and flounced in amorous sport
Through the smooth wave,—so wonderfully wrought
Her spell! my legs combined; my arms began
To' incorporate; my tall form grew spare and short;
O'er all my skin bright scales of silver ran;
And the mute fish possessed the late majestic man.

LXVII.

" Changed like myself in form and instincts, all
Swam the clear silver of the living stream;
What then my feelings were, I now recall
As through the medium of a brainsick dream:
At length it pleased the' Enchantress to redeem
Our spirits from the spell; our shapes we took,
But wonder kept us dumb, and awe supreme;
When, still some anger lowering in her look,
She, threatening thus, our hearts with fresh commotion shook.

LXVIII.

"Lo, now at length ye know my height of power,
My empire o'er you! in my will it lies,
To shut you up for ever in yon tower,
Dead to the sunshine of the cheerful skies;
Or rib you into rocks of stone or ice,
To bear the fury of all winds that blow;
To wing you into birds; or, in a trice,
Root you in earth to germinate and grow;
In shaggy hides to howl, or in cold fountains flow.

LXIX.

"You yet may shun my anger, if ye choose
To' adapt your conduct to my sovereign will;
Change but your faith, and in our service use
Your swords the impious Lorrainer to kill:"
All scorned the curst conditions to fulfil,
Save base Rambaldo; him, and him alone
She won,—whilst we (for 'gainst her magic skill
What could avail?) in darksome cells were thrown,
Beneath a weight of chains, for long, long moons to groan.

LXX.

"To the same castle came in evil hour
Bold Tancred, who by guile was captured too:
But the fair false Enchantress in her tower
Not long detained us; for, if fame say true,
An envoy with an armed retinue
Came with Prince Idraotes' signet ring
From rich Damascus,—of the maid to sue,
That he our troop, disarmed and chained, might bring
As an obliging gift before the' Egyptian king.

LXXI.

"Watched by a hundred guards we went our way;
When, as the providence of Heaven decreed,
The good Rinaldo, who from day to day
Goes adding by some new heroic deed
Fresh grace to glory, on his sprightly steed
Met us, nor paused a moment to assail
The knights our guard;—most nobly did he speed;
Victorious from the foe our shirts of mail
Striped, and to us restored, attest the certain tale.

LXXII.

"I saw, all saw him! to his robes we clung,
Heard his kind voice, and grasped his hand; thus then,
False is the rumour that from tongue to tongue
Sounds through the Camp, which misreports him slain :
The youth is safe; but thrice the sun's bright wain
Has circled heaven, since, with a pilgrim guide
Parting from us, he took the sandy plain
That leads to Antioch; having first aside
His shattered armour cast, to deepest crimson dyed."

LXXIII.

He ceased; meanwhile his eyes the Hermit raised
To heaven,—his colour changed, diviner grew
His sainted form; quick feelings feelings chased,
And all his features into sunshine threw :
Full of the Deity, his spirit flew
On rapture's glowing wings, in glorified
Trance to the sanhedrim of Angels,—drew
The curtains of the sanctuary aside,
And the eternal march of unborn years descried.

LXXIV.

Unlocking then in more than mortal sound
His lips, of things to come the Prophet tells;
The rest in wonder at the change stand round,
Attentive to his thundered oracles :
"He lives," he cried, "Rinaldo! and all else
Are but the wiles of feminine deceit;
He lives; and God, the living God that dwells
In splendours beaming round the Mercy-seat,
Reserves his unripe youth for glories more complete.

LXXV.

"Trivial as yet and infantile appears
Each feet of his wherewith awed Asia rings;
I see, I see him with the rushing years
Tame the strong crimes of Cæsars and of kings;
And with the mild shade of its silver wings,
I see his brooding Eagle overspread
The' Eternal City and the Church, that springs
From the wolf's paw redeemed as from the dead,
And many a worthy son shall bless his happy bed;—

LXXVI.

" Children, and children's sons, who shall be styled
Illustrious patterns of their sires' renown;
And guard from wicked courts and traitors vilde
The Papal mitre and the ducal crown,
With the religious temples; to strike down
The haughty, raise the weak, the guilty goad,
And shield young merit from misfortune's frown—
These be their arts; and in this glorious mode
Shall Este's Eagle soar beyond the Solar road.

LXXVII.

" And just it is, that, as by power unawed
She strikes for truth, rejoicing in the light,
From Peter's hands her pounce should bear abroad
The mortal thunders; wheresoe'er the fight
Waxes for Christ, her baffling pinions bright
With triumph aye shall spread; this brilliant track
Heaven, and her inborn virtue to her flight
Accord;—thus, home to the sublime attack
Whence she hath flown, 'tis willed the trumpets call her back!"

LXXVIII.

The griefs and fears that each had entertained,
Wise Peter's words did wholly dissipate;
Sole in the general joy the Duke remained
Silent, given up to themes of gravest weight:
Meanwhile the sun had reached Eve's golden gate;
Still Night o'er earth her solemn mantle throws;
Home to their several tents the Chiefs of state
Return, and give their members to repose;
But Godfrey's studious mind no rest in slumber knows.

END OF CANTO X.

JERUSALEM DELIVERED.

CANTO XI.





Statua lxxxi.

ARGUMENT.

WITH holy hymns, pure sacrifice, and prayer,
 The Christian hosts invoke celestial aid;
 Then storm the town, and to their rage lay bare
 The yawning walls,—some tempt the escalade;
 The breach is widened, when the Persian maid
 Shoots at the Captain from her mural height;
 With the sore wound his high success is stayed;
 Cured by an Angel, he renews the fight,
 But the sun soon rolls down, and Mars gives place to Night.

JERUSALEM DELIVERED.

CANTO XI.

I.

WHILST thus the Captain of the Christian nations,
Whose constant thoughts on the assault were bent,
Prepared, to shake to their most deep foundations
The city walls, each warlike instrument—
Forth came the Hermit from his morning tent;
And, taking him aside with solemn air,
In these grave words arrested his intent:
“Arms of this world, O Chief, dost thou prepare?
Know, 't is celestial aid that first should claim thy care!

II.

“Begin from Heaven; invoke with holy hymn,
With public prayer and reverential deed,
The armed host of Saints and Seraphim,
By whose blest aid success may be decreed;
In sacred garments let the Priests precede,
And tuneful psalms with suppliant voices raise;
Whilst thou and thy illustrious Nobles lead
The multitude along, that, as they gaze,
Shall catch from you the flame of piety and praise.”

III.

Severely spake the army's ghostly guide,
And virtuous Godfrey owned the words were wise;
“Servant approved of Jesus!” he replied,
“Well pleased I follow thy inspired advice;
Thus then, whilst I to these solemnities
My captains, lords, and chevaliers invite,
Seek thou the ministers of sacrifice,
William and Ademar; with them unite,—
The sacred pomp prepare, and ceremonial rite.

IV.

The Seer, the bishops, and the monks next morn,
With all the canons of inferior class,
Meet in a valley far from camp withdrawn,
Where, round an altar on the hallowed grass,
The Priests were wont to solemnize high mass;
White-robcs they wear; the Pastors of the flocks
Have on their sacerdotal albs, which pass
In front divided o'er their golden frocks,
Clasped with aigraffes of pearl; starred mitres crown their
locks.

V.

Peter alone, before, spread to the wind
The sacred sign which Seraphim revere;
The choir with slow and solemn steps behind
In two long ranks, apart, their voices rear
In heavenly hymns and anthems, that insphere
The spirit of sweet praise and humble prayer,
Sung in alternate chorus; last appear
William and Ademar,—the reverend pair
Bring up their arriere bands in order passing fair.

VI.

Great Bouillon next, without companion, passed,
As kings and princes use; by two and two
The Captains followed in his steps; and last,
The total host in distribution due,
Armed for defence: thus marshalled, they marched through
The portal-gates; all tumult far was flown;
Nor brazen horn ferocious clamours blew,
Nor war-cry shrilled; to heaven arose alone
Piety's suppliant voice in music's melting tone.

VII.

Thee, Father! thee they sing, coequal Son!
And thee, blest Spirit! in whom both combine;
All-pitying, saving, all-consoling One!
Thee, Virgin-Mother of the man divine!
And ye, who o'er the bright-wing'd hosts that shine
Around, in triple orbs vicegerence have,
Princedoms! your succour they invoke; and thine,
Baptist beloved! that in the less pure wave,
Pure Mary's sacred Son immaculate didst lave.

VIII.

Thee too they hail, the strong, the stable rock
Whereon the Church is built; whose gentle pleas
Win now thy new successor to unlock
The gracious gates of pardon and of peace;⁸
And the twelve heralds who o'er lands and seas
Adventuring, published with their latest breath
Their Lord's triumphant apotheosis;
And those who, seized, tormented for the Faith,
Proved with their blood its power, and sealed its truth with
death.

IX.

To saints whose writings point the path to truth
And bliss, no less soft supplications swell;
To Christ's dear handmaid, who in bloom of youth
The nobler part of life selected well;
To the chaste virgins that in cave or cell
With solemn nuptials were espoused to God;
And those, who, braving kings and nations fell,
The licitor's axe, the prætor's torturing rod,
Strait Virtue's thorny path magnanimously trod.

X.

Thus worshipping, thus chanting in their zeal,
Circling the long, long plain, the people came
With easy pace to Olivet, a hill
Fruitful in olives, whence it takes its name;
A hill long signalized by sacred fame
Through the wide world; like a majestic queen
East of the town it soars, as if to claim
The' ascendant, parted only by the green
Vale of Jehoshaphat, which fills the space between.

XI.

Thither the tuneful army tends, and fills
The heaven with melody; the vales ring round,
And answering Echo from her haunted hills,
From secret caves and hollow glens profound,
A thousand times repeats the charming sound;
You would have thought a choir of Dryads near,
Sang from the groves and grottos underground;
So variously, and aye so sweet and clear,
Jesu, Maria's name rewarbled back they hear.

XII.

On the town walls the curious Pagans stand,
Silent as summer night; in much amaze
At rites so strange, unwonted pomps so grand,
Their solemn march, and humble hymns of praise;
Long on the sacred spectacle they gaze;
But when the novelty of show is o'er,
A scornful yell the wicked miscreants raise,
That with loud blasphemies the mountains hoar,
Woods, torrents, towers, the rocks, and winding valleys roar.

XIII.

But not for this their pure, melodious song
The Christians cease; the clamours of their foes
Unmoved they slight, as they would slight a throng
Of chattering swallows or loquacious crows;
Nor can the arrows which their strong cross-bows
Loose, at such distance, from the dancing string,
Their orderly array to discompose,
Strike them with fear, or mar the notes they sing;
Full to their purposed close the hymns commenced they
bring.

XIV.

Next, for communion, on the mountain's height,
The sacramental altar beautified
With sculptured images they raise, and light
The golden lamps that stand on either side;
Then other vestments, more divinely dyed,
With gold engrained, the pontiff William wears;
And, after silent thought, to God their guide
Lowly he bends, and asks, in fervent prayers,
Peace for sins past, and grace against impending snares.

XV.

Whilst humbly round, the near spectators bend,
The more remote attend with stedfast eyes
His speaking lips; when now there was an end
Of the pure rites and mystic sacrifice,
The Bishop turned, and lifting toward the skies
His sacerdotal hands, the armies blessed;
Then cried to them, "Depart!" the companies,
With silent pomp slow wheeling to the west,
By the same path returned which they before had pressed.

XVI.

The' entrenchments entered, people, duke, and prince,
Filled with sweet peace to their pavilions went;
Whilst thousands, proud their homage to evince,
Escorted Godfrey as with one consent
E'en to the threshold of his curtained tent,
Parting with fond farewells: but he recalled
The captains, and, as midnight now was spent,
To a plain feast the party seneschalled,
And in the second seat the Count Toulouse installed.

XVII.

When they with drinks and viands had appeased
Nature's keen appetites, the General rose,
And thus his knights addressed: "When next the east
Shews morning, all things for the' assault dispose;
'T will be a day of bloodshed and of blows,
Havoc, and sweat, and toil, as this is one
Of preparation, quiet, and repose;
Go then, prepare yourselves and troops; that done,
Rest all,—the dial's shade has yet some hours to run."

XVIII.

This said, they take their leave; the heralds then
By blast of trumpet give commands, that all
Stand ready under arms when first they ken
The breaking day, to storm the Northern wall:
Brisk was the tending of the steeds in stall,
Hammering of armour, trimming of the crest,
And deep the hum of wassail, till the call
To vespers, and still Night, the friend of rest,
Giving new truce to toil, all eyes in slumber blessed.

XIX.

Dubious and dusk, the Lady of the dawn
Not yet had risen to walk her rosy round;
The shepherd sought not yet his customed lawn;
Nor shining share turned up the fallow ground;
Still in their nests the blithe birds slumbered sound;
Not yet the lark upsoared on flickering wing,
Nor forest echoed to the horn or hound;
When first the matin trump was heard to sing,
"To arms!"—"to arms!" the skies, and misty valleys ring.

XI.

Ten thousand tongues take up the welcome words,
"To arms!" and still "to arms!" is all their cry;
Godfrey awakes, but not this morning girds
The wonted cuishes on his martial thigh;
His greaves and iron mail are hung on high,
And on his back is borne a suppler suit,
Of lighter make, and less validity,—
Arms, only worn by such as fight on foot;
When in good Raymond comes, to pay the morn's salute.

XXI.

The Count, perceiving him armed thus, soon guessed
His purpose, and exclaimed; "How 's this, my lord?
Where is your solid breastplate? where the rest
Of your steel armours, hard and strong to ward
Strokes, that may else prove fatal? what! abroad
But half arrayed, in a juppón so weak!
This negligence we never can applaud;
It would appear, our Chief was bent to seek
Mean glory's course; of such these habits seem to speak.

XXII.

"What! look you for the private palm of those
That mount the breach? to others leave the task,
And some less serviceable souls expose
To risks adapted to the meed they ask;
Resume, my lord, your customary casque,
Vant-brace, and hauberk; know your proper post;
For ours, if not for your protection, mask
Your face; for Heaven's sake, go not thus exposed!
You are the soul, the strength, the life-blood of the host."

XXIII.

"When," said the Chief, "pope Urban girt this blade
On me in Clermont, and the holy Seer
Bade me perform in this divine crusade
The duties of a gallant chevalier,
I made a secret vow to God, that here
I would not act on this eventful day,
Come when it might, as Captain or as Peer;
But thus assume the arms and plain array
Which simple soldiers use, and combat e'en as they.

XXIV.

"When, therefore, these my armies marshalled stand
In war-bravade against the town,—when I
Have fully seen to all points that demand
The Chief's considerate head and judging eye,
Reason it is, nor thou the need deny,
That, faithful to my vow, I strive to reap
A soldier's laurels, to the walls draw nigh,
And, sword in hand, upon the ramparts leap;
Heaven will my ventured life in safe protection keep."

XXV.

He ceased; and the Frank knights with loud acclaim
The' example took; his brothers, and the rest
Of the confederate barons did the same,
And in light mail their limbs as footmen drest:
Meantime the Pagans to the quarter pressed
That fronts Arctóphylax, the icy Bear,
And thence wheels round towards the golden west:
For more accessible the site, and there
Less stubborn shew the walls, impregnable elsewhere.

XXVI.

Elsewhere, the crag-built town would scorn the war
Of hosting millions; thither not alone
Does the fierce tyrant the strong burghers draw,
The hireling aids, and satraps of his throne,
But them o'er whom advancing Age has strown
Its chill snows—bearded sires and boys he calls
To dangers and fatigues till now unknown;
These hie and serve the warriors on the walls
With stones, bitumen, lime, oil, darts and brimstone balls.

XXVII.

With bristling arms and many a fixed machine,
Lined are the walls that overlook the plain;
Breast-high above them is the Soldan seen,
Like a grim Giant; whilst, with fell disdain
For ever working in his fretful brain,
Elsewhere, far-off discerned, Argantes rears
His bulk enormous; and, betwixt the twain,
High on the topmost tower, Clorinda fierce,
Known by her silver arms, conspicuously appears.

XXVIII.

Her costly quiver, with sharp arrows stored,
Hangs at her back,—the bow is in her hands,
Bent,—the shaft dances on the chord, the chord
Is ready drawn, and oft her eye demands
The instant coming of the Christian bands:
Burning to twang the string against the crowd,
With lips apart the Lady archer stands
As Dian stood, when from the radiant cloud
She loosed her vengeful darts at Niobe the proud.

XXIX.

Below, on foot, the aged Monarch hies
From gate to gate, upon the walls surveys
His first arrangements with observant eyes,
And cheers his troops with speeches full of praise;
Here he recruits their ranks, and there displays
Store of fresh arms and engines, and with care
Provides for all; but, in the public ways,
Throngs of sad matrons to the mosques repair,
And to their Prophet false bend low in senseless prayer.

XXX.

“O Mahmoud! with thy strong and righteous hand
In twain the spear of this Frank spoiler break!
Check, and confound, and stretch him on the sand
Beneath our walls, for thine own glory's sake,
Which he so much has outraged!” thus they spake;
But their words reached not him, who, pierced with pains
Eternal, tosses on the fiery lake:—
Whilst for defence each nerve the City strains,
Musters the Christian Chief his army on the plains.

XXXI.

And first from camp his infantry he guides,
With wondrous providence and art disposed,
And 'gainst the walls to ruin doomed, divides
Transversely into two the massy host:
In centre the wheeled engines take their post,—
Structures of unimaginable powers,—
Scorpions and strong ballistæ; whence are tost,
Like lightning and like thunder on the towers,
Lances, and quarried rocks, and sleet of arrowy showers.

XXXII.

His heavier-armed he places in the rear
For surer guard, his light-horse in the wings;
Then gives the word, and instant in the ear
Of either host the signal-trumpet rings:
Tremendous is the cast of stones from slings,
Javelins from engines, quarrels from cross-bows,
And mortal arrows from resounding strings;
Some fall, some flee; and thinned and broken shews,
On the defended wall, the phalanx late so close.

XXXIII.

Then with all speed the eager Franks impel
Their progress; part into a tortoise form,
Shield locked with shield, beneath its iron shell
Secure; whilst part slink from the sounding storm
Of stones and raining darts, in cubiform
Battalia underneath the vines; they gain,
Thus screened, the counterscarp, and ceaseless swarm,
Fervent as summer-emnets, nor in vain,
The hollow depth to fill, and equal with the plain.

XXXIV.

The circling moat was not of marshy sward,
(This the dry soil forbade,) nor soft with mud;
So that they filled it soon, though large and broad,
With turf, stones, timber, and fascines of wood:
Daring Adrastus was the first that stood
From forth the shell of shields; he raised sublime
A scaling-ladder, and, despite the flood
Poured from above, of boiling pitch and lime,
Dauntless his crest advanced, and stood resolved to climb.

XXXV.

The fiery Switzer in his rash neglect
Of life, on high with wonder they survey,
Mark to a thousand arrows, and unchecked
By all that would his course audacious stay;
Half had he finished his aerial way,
When sudden, by the strong Circassian thrown,
A huge round rock with quick tempestuous sway,
As from a mortar shot, upon his crown
Alit, and rudely beat the heroic soldier down.

XXXVI.

Not mortal is the stroke ; but still the fall
Stuns him, and mute and motionless he lies ;
Loud shouted then the victor on the wall,—
“ Fallen is the first ! who next the venture tries ?
Why not assail us in the open skies ?
Come from your caves ; skulk not like foxes there,—
I skulk not ; nothing shall your strange device
Save you, but like the badger and the bear
Die in your dens ye shall ; by Mahomet I swear ! ”

XXXVII.

Not for his taunt the Franks their toil refrain ;
But, close in curtain of their sheds concealed,
Safe the barbed darts and heavy weights sustain,
Man linked with man, and shield compact with shield ;
Whilst to the basis of the walls are wheeled
Batteries, of beams immeasurable, with plates
Of hammered iron thrice with fire annealed,
Fronted like rams ; at whose assailing threats
Tremble the lofty walls, and shake the echoing gates.

XXXVIII.

Meanwhile a hundred hands upon the walls
Have heaved, and hung in terrible libration
O'er the blind tortoise a huge crag ; as falls
The loosed lavange from its aerial station,
Down, down it rolled,—in thundering dislocation
Crushed the dense shell of shields, crushed helm and head,
And left the battered ground, in agitation
From the o'erwhelming mountain, overspread
With blood, with brains, with bones, and arms of sanguine red.

XXXIX.

No longer now beneath the sheltering roof
Of their machines the Franks themselves confine,
But from the latent risks to open proof
Of danger rush, and give their light to shine ;
Some raise scalados, nor to mount decline,
Though in the face of peril and mishap ;
Others the deep foundations undermine ;
Then rock the walls, and many a glorious gap
Starts in the shrinking base and buttresses they sap.

XL.

And fallen they had, so fast its boisterous blows
Thereon the huge bombarding ram repeats,
But from the battlements the Turks oppose
The wonted artifice that most defeats
Its horned might; where'er the vast beam beats,
Packs of soft wool elastic they suspend;
With which, whenas the butting engine meets,
The substance yields, the pliant swathes distend,
Break the rude shock, and save the' endangered wall defend.

XLI.

Whilst in this valiant mode the daring bands
Round the climbed walls in clusters fight and bleed,
Seven times Clorinda bends, seven times her hands
Twang the tough bow, and loose the eager reed;
As many shafts as from the ivory speed,
So many stain their points and grey-goose wings,
Not in plebeian blood—so mean a deed
Her spirit had disdained,—but that which springs
In the more noble veins of heroes, chiefs, and kings.

XLII.

The first brave knight that by her arrow bled,
Was the young heir of Britain's happy land;
Scarce from the tortoise had he raised his head,—
The shaft came down, and pierced his better hand;
His glove of steel availed not to withstand
The deadly weapon,—from the wounded vein
Gushed the bright blood, and purpled all the sand:
Disabled thus for fight, he left the plain,
And, groaning, gnashed his teeth, but more from rage than
pain.

XLIII.

The good Count Amboise on the fosse's bank,
And in the high scalade Clotharius died;
The former pierced from breast to back, the Frank
More dreadfully transfix'd from side to side;
Again she shot; and as the Flemings' guide
Swung the huge ram, her arrow cut the wind,
And pierced his arm: to draw the dart he tried;
But ill the shaft obeyed his ardent mind,
The shaft indeed he drew, but left the head behind.

XLIV.

As too rash Ademar, the grave and good,
Watched the assault far-off, the fatal cane,
Charged with hot wrath, came whizzing where he stood,
And grazed his brow ; impatient of the pain,
He clapped his hand upon the wounded vein,
When lo, a second nailed it to his head,
And quivering fixed in his bewildered brain !
He falls—his holy blood by woman shed,
Floats o'er his priestly robes, and dyes the sable red.

XLV.

As Palamed, the young, the bold, and brisk,
Climbed the tall steps, and on the steep tower's height
Just placed his foot, disdaining every risk,
To his right eye the seventh shaft took its flight ;
Passed its orb'd cell, and through the nerves of sight
Issued, vermilion, at the nape ; he fell,
Blind with the shadows of fast-hasting night,
And sighed out life beneath the citadel
Which he had hoped to win, and had assailed so well.

XLVI.

Thus shot the maid ! the Duke meanwhile oppressed
In fresh assaults, beside the Northern gate,
The' embattled guard ; and to the walls addressed
The most colossal of his engines great,—
A tower of cedar, built sublime to mate
The topmost walls, stupendous to behold !
Ponderous with ported arms, and fraught with fate,
With half a squadron in its spacious hold—
On thunderous wheels it moved, and near the turrets rolled.

XLVII.

Onward it came ; far shooting, as it drove,
Lightnings of arrows at its facing foes ;
And, as ships use with ships in sea-fights, strove
By instant grappling with the walls to close :
But this the Pagans at all points oppose ;
Now pushing back the fabric, battering now
Its front and timbered sides with clubs, with crows,
And Moorish maces ; with the rocks they throw,
Creak the huge beams above, the heaving wheels below.

XLVIII.

Such was from this part, such from that the flight
Of stones and darts, that Titan seemed to shroud
His face, blue heaven shewed brown as summer-night,
And cloud, rebounding, clashed in air with cloud,
Like two thwart tides: as leaves from forests bowed
By showers congealed in winter's icy hall
To hail,—as apples shook by whirlwinds loud
In unripe greenness from the stalk, so fall—
In heaps the Moslem foe from the dismantled wall.

XLIX.

For 't was on them the shot most havoc made,
As less defenced and sheltered from its power;
Of the forlorn survivors, numbers fled,
In utter terror of the fulmined shower,
And thunder of the strong stupendous tower;
But still the Soldan stayed, and round him drew
A few bold spirits unalarmed, the flower
Of Syrian bravery; Argantes too,
Armed with a ponderous beam, against the fabric flew.

L.

Back with vast force, the length of all the pine,
He pushed, and kept it distant; to his side
Came from her tower the Lady palatine,
With them in glory and in risk allied;
Meanwhile the Christians with long scythes divide
From the wall's headlong perpendicular,
The ropes to which the pendent bales were tied;
Which, down descending, leave the ramparts bare
To all the rude affronts and thunderstrokes of war:

L I.

And thus the tower above and ram below
Play with such fury now, that they begin,
Crushed, cleft and undermined, to yawn, and shew
The houses, mosques, and peopled streets within;
Thither the army swarms with lively din,
By Godfrey led beneath the battled marge;
Who, fully bent the tottering wall to win,
Moves under compass of that ampler targe,
Which never loads his arm, but on some desperate charge.

LII.

Thence he perceives Prince Solyman descend
Down to the gaping breach, and, sword in hand,
The' attempted pass at all risks to defend,
With fixed resolve, imperatively grand,
Amidst the ruins take his haughty stand ;
Leaving on guard, with providence discreet,
Clorinda and Argantes, to command
The walls ; he sees, and feels his bosom beat
With generous scorn of life, and glory's fervent heat :

LIII.

And to the good Sigiér, who bore behind
His bow and buckler, he directs his speech ;
" Give me, my friend, that lighter shield refined,
Whose temper, axe nor sabre can impeach ;
Quick ! to yon ruined rocks I mean to reach ;
And of these multitudes the first to be
That pass victorious through the guarded breach ;
High time it is, that of my chivalry
Some such transcendent proof the host at length should see !"

LIV.

Scarce, changing shields, had he said this, than swift
A barbed arrow on sonorous wing,
Shot from the summit of the mural clift,
Transfixed his leg, where keenest was the sting,
The nervous region whence its sinews spring ;
'T was thou, Clorinda, if report say true,
Sent the fell shaft, and 't is thy praise we sing ;
From thrall, from death, if then thy Pagan crew
Escaped, to thee alone the laurel-leaves are due.

LV.

But the brave Chief, as though he did not feel
The deadly anguish of the hurt he bore,
Ceased not his course, but climbed with daring zeal
The breach, and down fresh rocky fragments tore,
Cheering his party on ; but stiff and sore
The wound soon waxed ; and the encumbering foot
His active labours can sustain no more ;
Through all the limb keen shivering horrors shoot ;
Forced, he at length gives o'er, and quits the wished pursuit.

LVI.

Beckoning Guelph therefore to his side, he said;
"Withdraw I must; sustain, my friend, I pray,
The Captain's place and person in my stead,
Supply mine absence in this sharp assay;
Short, at the worst, will be the time I stay,
I do but go and come,—my hurt bites keen,
Though but a bruise;" this said, without delay,
On a light steed he leaped, and o'er the green
Rode to the Camp, but not, as he supposed, unseen.

LVII.

With him good fortune from his host departs
In favour of the foe, whose hopes rise high;
Strength and fresh spirits lift their dancing hearts,
Knit the slack arm, and fire the languid eye;
But with the Franks all strength and ardour die;
Weak grow their onsets; they maintain their ground,
But short of blood their darted weapons fly;
The sword still strikes, but strikes without a wound;
And e'en the' appealing trumps more languishingly sound.

LVIII.

And now again the crowded ramparts shew
Those who in panic late were scattered thence;
The very women, with the genuine glow
Of patriot rage and martial confidence
Caught from Clorinda, rush to their defence;
With robes succinct, and loose locks they appear,
Ranged all along the spacious ramparts, whence
'They toss the dart, nor shew the slightest fear
To' expose their beauteous breasts for fortresses so dear.

LIX.

But that which most dismayed the Franks, and most
Revived the guardians of the sacred town,
Was, that a rock, in sight of either host,
Came from afar, and struck Lord Guelpho down;
Amidst a thousand as he climbed, the stone
Fell where the sinews of the knee were knit,
And ground its shivering armour to the bone;
At the same moment, a like mass alit
On Raymond's morioned brows, and him too backward smit.

LX.

Eustace is next hurt sore, as from the bank
 Of the broad fosse he purposes to spring;
 Nor in this hour so adverse to the Frank,
 Was there one weapon sent upon the wing,
 From horn or hand, from catapult or sling,
 That did not, to their cost, or tear apart
 Spirit from flesh, or bruise, or keenly sting;
 In this success, wild waxed Argantes' heart,
 And thus he roared, in sounds that made both armies start:

LXI.

"This is not Antioch, nor is this the night
 Friendly to Christian guile; look up! survey
 The shining sun, troops wakeful, and the fight,
 Of a far different nature and array:
 Is then your ancient love of praise and prey
 Quite gone? extinct each spark of former fire?
 That ye with such admired address give way,
 And, spent so soon, from the assault retire,
 O foemen! — nay, not men, but maids in men's attire!"

LXII.

By such-like taunts the haughty Chevalier
 To such excess of rage his temper wrought,
 That the large city seemed too small a sphere
 For his hot spirit and capacious thought:
 Up, with a shout, his strong beech-spear he caught;
 Down leaping from the ramparts, made more wide
 The ruin of the breach; and, as he brought
 His bulk beneath it, seeing at his side
 The dauntless Soldan, thus magnanimously cried:

LXIII.

"Lo, Solyman, the place! and lo, the time,
 That may at length decide our proud dispute!
 What wait you for? what fear? now first let him
 Leap forth, who most the laurel and the fruit
 Of sovereignty desires!" with this salute,
 Out at once rushed they through the broken wall,
 Their daring deeds to their demands to suit;
 That, headstrong rage provoked, and native gall,
 This, rival honour much, and much the rival's call.

LXIV.

Sudden and unforeseen upon the Franks,
In desperate rivalry, with shouts they flew;
And from amidst their dissipated ranks
So many soldiers pierced, so many slew,
And bucklers split, and helmets cleft in two,
And ladders broke, and swinging rams cut down,
That it might seem a second rampart grew,
On failure of the first, hill-high, to crown
The ruined heap, and fend afresh the' endangered town.

LXV.

The crowds that late were ardent to ascend
The walls, to danger urged by the desire
Of mural crowns, now scarce themselves defend,
Much less to climb the rifted breach aspire,
But from the fierce assault, dismayed, retire;
Their rams, their vines, their catapults they quit;
Which, left a prey to the revenging ire
Of the two Pagans, battered, crushed, and split,
Are for all future use soon rendered quite unfit.

LXVI.

Like rapt Demoniacs loose, the dreadful pair
Wide and more wide the field of battle scour;
Call to the citizens for fire, and bear
Two blazing pines against the cedarn tower:
Forth from the gates of their Tartarean bower,
So curst Megara with Alecto breaks,
To set the world in uproar, with the power
Of Dis possessed; so each fell Sister shakes
Abroad her sparkling brand and bacchanalian snakes.

LXVII.

But Tancred, who elsewhere, yet unrepelled,
Cheered on his troops forth issuing from the vines,
Soon as that bold achievement he beheld,
The double brandished flames, the burning pines,—
Broke short his speech, and to the Saracines
Rushed, to chastise their rage and stay their wrack;
And of his prowess gave such pregnant signs,
That they who late as conquerors pressed the' attack,
Forbore the chase, and fled themselves affrighted back.

LXVIII.

Fled the grim Soldan, fled the Mamaluke;
With humbler crests the way they came they went;
Thus changed the war! meanwhile, the wounded Duke
Had reached with pain the threshold of his tent;
And now 'twixt Baldwin and Sigiér stood bent
On instant succour; crowds on crowds succeed,
Who fill the air with sighing and lament;
He, whilst endeavouring from the flesh with speed
To draw at once the steel, broke short the rooted reed.

LXIX.

Thus baffled, careless of the coming smart,
He bade them take at once the shortest way
For cure, to largely lance the wounded part,
And bare to sight the barbed weapon lay:
"Send me but back to war, ere closing day
Invalidate our arms, or cool our zeal!"
He said; and straight, forbidding all delay,
Propt on his lance, to the physician's steel
Stretched out the afflicted limb, firm resting on his heel.

LXX.

Gray Erotimus, born beside the Po,
Came to his aid; a sage, who knew the use
And secret virtues of all springs that flow—
Of all green herbs the hills and woods produce;
He too was smiled on by the partial Muse,
But valued sweet Castalia's warbling wave
Less than the mute fall of Pæonian dews;
His science wounded men from death could save,
And cancelled names in verse immortally engrave.

LXXI.

Supported stands the Chief, serene; he grieves
But to behold his friends lamenting round;
The ready leech tucked up his long loose sleeves,
And with a belt his flowing tunic bound;
With sovereign herbs attractive, he the wound
Soothed, with kind hand soliciting the dart,
Which yet stirred not; when this the Ancient found,
With nipping pincers he performed his part;
Still the vexed steel adhered, and mocked his nicest art.

LXXII.

No way seems Fortune willing to assist
His purpose or his skill ; and Godfrey shews
Signs of sharp agony,—a deathlike mist
Swims o'er his sight, and from his members flows
A dead cold sweat : but piteous of his throes,
His guardian Angel from Mount Ida flies
With gathered dittany ; an herb that blows
With purple flowers, delightful to the eyes,
In whose young downy leaves divinest virtue lies.

LXXIII.

The secret powers of this celestial plant,
Maternal Nature to the mountain goat
Suggests, when, wounded in its heathy haunt,
The shaft adheres within its shaggy coat ;
This now, though from a region so remote,
The winged Angel in a moment bears ;
And, so that none the heavenly succour note,
In the warm bath which next the sage prepares,
Distils the sprightly juice, nor other medicines spares.

LXXIV.

Dews from the Lydian well, ambrosial oils,
And odorous panacee therein he flings ;
The Sage with this the thrilling wound embroils,
And, thus fomented, the barb'd steel outsprings
With voluntary impulse,—pain's sharp stings
Cease, the blood stanches, the cleft parts combine,
And a fresh vigour each lax tendon strings :
"Lo !" cried the leech, "this is no cure of mine ;
This is not art's effect, but done by hands divine.

LXXV.

"Some Angel, shooting from the stars unspied,
Has been thy surgeon ; of his heavenly hand
I see the tokens ; arm then, arm !" he cried,
"Why linger ? back, the battle to command !"
His leg the Chieftain with a purple band
Wrapped round, and, ardent for the war, in haste
Seized his ash-spear immeasurably grand,
Again upon his arm his buckler braced,
And on his cheerful brows the glistening helmet laced.

LXXVI.

And from his tent toward the shaken town
Turned with a thousand knights, and left the camp ;
Clouds of raised dust the sapphire skies embrown,
In heaven's bright temple fades the' immortal lamp ;
Trembles the firm earth underneath their stamp ;
And, far-off as the foes his coming spy,
Chill flows their blood ; their zeal faint horrors damp,
And through their bones fear's shivering lightnings fly ; —
Loud shouted Godfrey thrice, loud thundered thrice the sky.

LXXVII.

Well knew his men the tones, which in them breathe
Zeal for the strife, and sorrow for their fault ;
Their faintness, fears, they to the winds bequeath,
And rush renewed, like lions to the' assault :
Prest home, the two ferocious Pagans vault
Into the mural breach ; thence quick protend
Their poignant spears, their moony shields exalt,
And stubbornly the rifted pass defend
From Tancred's knights, that thick as buzzing bees ascend.

LXXVIII.

Hither came Godfrey, gloriously embossed
In arms, wrath flashing from his looks severe ;
And the next moment at Argantes tossed
The Jove-like lightnings of his awful spear ;
Never from town or tower did engineer
From the strong scorpion rock or javelin cast
With more consummate force or swift career, —
The knotty beam e'en thundered as it passed ;
Up raised the knight his shield, to meet it nought aghast.

LXXIX.

The poignant ash his shield in sunder clove,
Nor could his coat of mail its flight restrain ;
Through shield, belt, corslet, ruining it drove,
And in pure vermeil did its point engrain ;
But the fierce knight, impregnable to pain,
From his pierced veins and shattered brigantine
Plucked the fixt steel ; and, hurling it-again
At Godfrey, cried ; " To thee I re-consign
The gift ; look thou thereto ; it is no toy of mine ! "

LXXX.

Back on its mission of revenge, the spear
Through the known path careering flew, but now
Struck not the mark at which 't was aimed; the Peer,
Its flight foreseeing, bent his plum'd head low,
And fairly shunned the meditated blow :
Yet void it fell not ! deep the weapon lies
In Sigier's throat; he dies, but not in woe ;
Since in the stead of his loved lord he dies,
Glad from its cherished shrine the faithful spirit flies.

LXXXI.

At the same instant, with a pointed rock,
The powerful Soldan smote the Norman lord ;
Who staggering, reeling, dizzy'd with the shock,
E'en like a whirling top from the child's cord,
Spun round, and senseless sank upon the sword :
Godfrey no longer could his wrath command ;
But, brandishing his unsheathed blade abroad,
Clambered high up the ruined heap, where stand
The two colossal knights, and braved them, hand to hand.

LXXXII.

Then glorious deeds he did, and would have done,
For sharp and deadly were the strokes he gave ;
But, curtained in red clouds the slumberous sun
Went down, and from her dark Cimmerian cave
Night came, pacific, o'er the world to wave
Her arbitrary sceptre, and allay
The rage of wretched mortals ; Bouillon brave
Thus ceased from fight, and through the shadows gray
Led back his hosts to camp : so passed that bloody day.

LXXXIII.

But, ere the pious Chief forsook the field,
He saw the wounded borne in spacious car
Safe to the tents, nor to the foe would yield
In prey an atom of his works of war ;
The tower that did with most of havoc mar
The marble walls, and scared with most affright,
Remained entire, though seamed with many a scar ;
The dreadful storm and thunders of the fight,
Though they had bruised its frame, had left the timbers tight.

LXXXIV.

Scaped the dire perils of the strife, it leaves
For a safe spot the scene of enterprise ;
But, as a vessel crowding sail, that cleaves
The roaring sea and its vext waves defies,
Just as its wished-for port the Captain spies
Clear through his optic tube, in sudden squall,
Strikes on hid rocks,—or as a steed, that plies
With sure-foot speed his journey safe through all
The rugged lanes, drops down, in sight of his sweet stall;—

LXXXV.

So the tower struck, so stumbled ! on the side
Which had sustained the' artillery of the foe,
Two wheels broke down whereon the piece should slide,
Already crazed by some tempestuous blow ;
That the huge engine stayed its motion slow,
And overhead hung ruinous in air ;
But they with beams support it from below,
Till the prompt architects with skilful care
Uprear the' enormous bulk, its breaches to repair.

LXXXVI.

Thus Godfrey bade, that the stupendous mass
Might be refitted, ere the morning smile ;
Then with his soldiers occupied each pass,
And stationed guards around the spacious pile ;
But with the shrill sound of the saw and file,
Compingling rumours of the Chief's designs
Are by the townsmen clearly heard ; the while
A thousand lights around the structure shine,
Whereby the work they watch, the latent scheme divine.

END OF CANTO XI.

JERUSALEM DELIVERED.

--- **CANTO XII.** ---





Stanza lxi.

ARGUMENT.

FIRST from her faithful slave Clorinda learns
 The secret story of her birth ; then goes,
 Masked, on a high adventure, and returns
 Safe to the gates, successful o'er her foes ;
 But, chased by Tancred to the vales, they close
 In mortal battle, and she falls ; yet ere
 She dies, the rite of baptism he bestows ;
 Soresly the Prince bewails his slaughtered fair ;—
 Argantes vows revenge, and soothes the crowd's despair.

JERUSALEM DELIVERED.

CANTO XII.

I.

'T WAS night; nor yet had either wearied host
Found soft refreshment in the arms of sleep;
But here the Christians, wakeful at their post,
Guard o'er the workmen round the engine keep;
And there the Pagans their defences steep,
Trembling and nodding to their fall, repair;
And, to build up the breaches wide and deep
Of the dismantled walls, no labour spare;
And each their wounded tend, with like considerate care.

II.

At length the wounds are bandaged, and complete
Is every one of their nocturnal tasks;
The rest they leave; and, wooed to slumber sweet
By gentler quiet, and the gloom that masks
The world at noon of night, their cumbrous casques
They cast aside: not so the Warrior maid;
Hungering for fame, she still for action asks,—
Action, from which fatigues all else dissuade;
With her Argantes walked, and inly thus she said:

III.

“Deeds rare and wonderful indeed this day
Have the bold Soldan and divine Argaunt
Accomplished, by themselves to take their way,
Huge towers beat down, and hostile millions daunt;
Whilst I, (the utmost merit I can vaunt,)
Cooped in on high, with distant shafts but checked
Their eager escalade; my shafts, I grant,
Flew fair enough, some fatal, I suspect;
But is this then the whole we women can effect?”

IV.

"Better it were in woods and wilds again
To stags and wolves my arrows to confine,
Than trifle thus, a damsel, in the train
Of knights whose actions so superior shine;
Why not the cuirass and the sword resign?
Resume my woman's weeds, and live dissolved
In careless ease?" thus mused she; but in fine
A daring project in her breast revolved,—
Turned to the knight, and thus broke forth with soul resolved:

V.

"I know not what blest ardour sets ablaze
My restless mind,—or do the Gods inspire
The daring thought that on my spirit preys,
Or make we Gods of each sublime desire?
Far lie the Franks encamped: look forth; admire
The twinkling lights that burn towards the west;
There will I go with torch and sword, and fire
Their rolling fort; this passion of my breast
Let me but see fulfilled, and Heaven arrange the rest!

VI.

"But, if I chance to be by Fate debarred
From measuring back my steps, to thee, my friend,
The man that loves me with a sire's regard,
And my devoted damsels I commend:
Each kind protection to their griefs extend,
And back to Egypt, with the dear old sage,
The' inconsolable girls in safety send;
Promise me this! their sex and his great age
May well thy care demand, thy sympathies engage."

VII.

Argantes stood amazed; touched in his breast
Were all the springs of glory, and he cried;
"Wilt thou do this? and leave thy friend, disgraced,
Here with the' inglorious vulgar to abide?
Safe from the risk shall I with joy or pride
See the fire kindle? no, Clorinda, no!
If I have ever been in arms allied
With thee, with thee this night too will I go,
And all thy fortunes share, betide me weal or woe!

VIII.

"I have a heart too can scorn death, and feel
The bauble life well flung for fame away :"
"To this," she answered, "an eternal seal
Didst thou in thy brave sally set to-day ;
But I am a mere woman in the way ;
Feeble indeed are my poor powers, and small
The aid I lend ; my death would none dismay ;
But (Heaven avert the omen!) shouldst thou fall,
Who will remain behind to guard the sacred wall?"

IX.

"Why these excuses vain?" the knight replied ;
"Fixed is my will, and settled mine intent ;
Allowed, I follow ; but, if once denied,
I go before thee, and thy zeal prevent :"
Thus overpowered, Clorinda gave consent,—
They seek the King, with Emir, prince and peer
Engaged in high and serious argument ;
Then thus the Virgin spoke ; "O Sire, give ear,
And what we wish to say with kind acceptance hear !

X.

"Argantes swears (nor vain will be the boast)
To fire yon rolling fort,—the same swear I ;
We wait alone till on the guardian host
Deep sleep falls heavy ; those who wake shall die !"
The hoary King held up his hands on high ;
A tear of joy streamed down his withered cheek ;
"And praised," he said, "be Thou, who yet dost eye
With gracious care thy worshippers, and seek
Still to preserve my crown, and guard these kingdoms weak !

XI.

"Fall they shall not, whilst in their sure defence
Two such undaunted demigods are found ;
To your deserts what equal recompense
Can I decree ? O, evermore renowned !
Let Fame her golden trumpet take, and sound
Your glory, tuned to music's loftiest pitch,
And fill the' enchanted Universe around !
The deed itself be your reward ; to which
No trifling part I add of realms esteemed as rich !"

XII.

He said, and fondly to his bosom strained
Now him, now her; to equal transport charmed,
The Soldan stood, nor in his heart contained
The generous envy that his spirit warmed:
But cried; "And not for nothing am I armed
With this good sword, nor shall I be less slow
To toss the fires!" the Amazon, alarmed
For her endangered fame, replied, "Not so;
Are all to make the attempt? who stays, if thou shouldst go?"

XIII.

Argantes too, with features full of pride,
Stood ready to reject his scorned request;
But this the King forestalled, and first replied
With placid aspect to his regal guest;
"Forward thou ever art to manifest
Thyself emphatically great, a knight
Prompt to dispute the laurel with the best,
Consistent with thyself, untired in fight,
Whom no new shape of death or danger can affright!

XIV.

"I know that, sallying forth, thou deeds wouldst do
Worthy the Soldan; but for all to quit
Your wonted stations in the town, of you,
My bravest heroes, were a thing unfit,
Fraught with alarm; I would not e'en permit
These to depart, with such a jealous care
Guard I their lives, if I could well commit
To other hands the enterprise they dare,—
Or if the deed itself of less importance were.

XV.

"But since around the' immeasurable tower
The guards so thick are stationed, that a few
Would not suffice, and numbers at this hour
Could not conveniently be spared on new
Fatiguing services, e'en let the two
That, to such risks accustomed, first proposed
The noble task, with prospering stars pursue
Their schemes alone, and realize a boast
Made in no idle mood; they are themselves a host.

XVI.

"Do thou, as best becomes a king, remain
As regent of the gates; and when the pair,
Of whose success sure hopes I entertain,
Have fired the pile and back their footsteps bear,
Prest by the Christians, with thy Turks repair,
Beat off the fierce pursuers, and prevent
The harms which else revenging rage may dare :"
Thus spoke the King; the Soldan, ill content,
Said not another word, but smiled a sour assent.

XVII.

"Yet go not," said Ismeno, "till I mix,
Of various grain impregn'd with fiery spume,
Tartareous balls, that where they strike shall fix,
Fixing ignite, and blazing, soon consume
The tower to dust: the witching hour of gloom
Draws nigh; by then the soldiers may remit
Their watch, o'erpowered by languor, and the fume
Of sleep;" all praise the sorcerer's pregnant wit,
And parting wait the hour by him determin'd fit.

XVIII.

Her sculptured helm, her greaves of silver plate,
And burnished mail aside Clorinda laid;
And in a suit prophetic of her fate,
Sable, and rough with rust, her limbs arrayed,
Where no bright jewel flashed, nor plumage played:
For thus she thought unseen to leave beguiled
The watch, swift stealing through the friendly shade;
'T was then her eunuch came, Arsetes mild,
Who had her cradle rocked, and nursed her from a child.

XIX.

All careless of fatigue, the good old man
Tended her still; and, chancing now to see
The surreptitious arms, he soon began
To comprehend her risk; and on his knee,
Sore weeping, by the pious memory
Of his past offices, by locks grown grey
In her dear service, and by every plea
Of love and pity, did he long time pray
Her to resign the attempt, and still she answered nay.

XX.

At length he said; "Since in its wrong thy mind
Is obstinate, since to my feeble years,
Since to my silver tresses thou art blind,
Blind to my love, and proof to all my tears,
My piteous prayers, and too prophetic fears,—
Lo, from thy hitherto unknown descent
I rend the veil! that known, do what appears
Good in thy sight:"—amazed, Clorinda bent
On him her large dark eyes, and thus the story went.

XXI.

"In former days o'er Ethiopia reigned,
Happy perchance reigns still, Senapo brave;
Who with his dusky people still maintained
The laws which Jesus to the nations gave:
'T was in his court, a Pagan and a slave,
I lived, o'er thousand maids advanced to guard,
And wait with authorized assumption grave,
On her whose beauteous brows the crown instarred;
True, she was brown, but nought the brown her beauty
marred.

XXII.

"The King adored her, but his jealousies
Equalled the fervours of his love; the smart
At length of sharp suspicion by degrees
Gained such ascendance in his troubled heart,
That from all men in closest bower apart
Hemewed her, where e'en Heaven's chaste eyes, the bright
Stars, were but half allowed their looks to dart;
Whilst she, meek, wise, and pure as virgin light,
Made her unkind lord's will her rule and chief delight.

XXIII.

"Hung was her room with storied imageries
Of martyrs and saints; a Virgin here,
On whose fair cheeks the rose's sweetest dyes
Glowed, was depicted in distress; and near,
A monstrous dragon, which with poignant spear
An errant knight transfixing, prostrate laid:
The gentle Lady oft with many a tear
Before this painting meek confession made
Of secret faults, and mourned, and Heaven's forgiveness
prayed.

XXIV.

"Pregnant meanwhile, she bore (and thou wert she)
A daughter white as snow; the' unusual hue,
With wonder, fear and strange perplexity
Disturbed her, as though something monstrous too:
But, as by sad experience well she knew
His jealous temper and suspicious haste,
She cast to hide thee from thy father's view;
For in his mind, (perversion most misplaced!)
Thy snowy chasteness else had argued her unchaste.

XXV.

"And in thy cradle to his sight exposed
A negro's new-born infant for her own;
And, as the tower wherein she lived enclosed
Was kept by me and by her maids alone,—
To me whose firm fidelity was known,
Who loved and served her with a soul sincere,
She gave thee, beauteous as a rose unblown,
Yet unbaptized; for there, it would appear,
Baptized thou couldst not be in that thy natal year.

XXVI.

"Weeping she placed thee in my arms, to bear
To some far spot; what tongue can tell the rest!
The plaints she used; and with what wild despair
She clasped thee to her fond maternal breast:
How many times 'twixt sighs, 'twixt tears caressed;
How oft, how very oft her vain adieu
Sealed on thy cheek; with what sweet passion pressed
Thy little lips! at length a glance she threw
To Heaven, and cried; 'Great God, that look'st all spirits
through!—

XXVII.

"'If both my heart and members are unstained,
And nought did e'er my nuptial bed defile,—
(I pray not for myself; I stand arraigned
Of thousand sins, and in thy sight am vile;)
Preserve this guiltless infant, to whose smile
The tenderest mother must refuse her breast,
And from her eyes their sweetest bliss exile!
May she with chastity like mine be blessed;
But stars of happier rule have influence o'er the rest!

XXVIII.

“ ‘ And thou, blest Knight, that from the cruel teeth
Of the grim dragon freed'st that holy maid,
Lit by my hands if ever odorous wreath
Rose from thy altars ; if I e'er have laid
Thereon gold, cinnamon, or myrrh, and prayed
For help, through every chance of life display,
In guardianship of her, thy powerful aid ! ’
Convulsions choked her words,—she swooned away—
And the pale hues of death on her chill temples lay.

XXIX.

“ With tears I took thee, in a little ark
So hid by flowers and leaves that none could guess
The secret, brought thee forth 'twixt light and dark,
And, unsuspected, in a Moorish dress,
Passed the town-walls : as through a wilderness
Of forests horrid with brown glooms, I took
My pensive way, I saw, to my distress,
A tigress issuing from a bosky nook,
Rage in her scowling brows, and lightning in her look.

XXX.

“ Wild with affright, I on the flowery ground
Cast thee, and instant climbed a tree close by ;
The savage brute came up, and glancing round
In haughty menace, saw where thou didst lie ;
And, softening to a mild humanity
Her stern regard, with placid gestures meek,
As by thy beauty smit, came courteous nigh ;
In amorous pastime fawning licked thy cheek ;
And thou on her didst smile, and stroke her mantle sleek.

XXXI.

“ With her fierce muzzle and her cruel front
Thy little hands did innocently play ;
She offered thee her teats, as is the wont
With nurses, and adapted them, as they,
To thy young lips ; nor didst thou turn away,—
She suckled thee ! a prodigy so new
Filled me with fresh confusion and dismay :
She, when she saw thee satisfied, withdrew
Into the shady wood, and vanished from my view.

XXIII.

“ Again I took thee, and pursued my way
Through woods, and vales, and wildernesses dun ;
Till in a little village making stay,
I gave thee secretly in charge to one,
Who fondly nursed thee till the circling sun,
With sixteen months of equatorial heat,
Had tinged thy face ; till thou too hadst begun
To prattle of thy joys in murmurs sweet,
And print her cottage floor with indecisive feet.

XXIII.

“ But, having past the autumn of my years,
As sprightly vigour failed and life declined,
Rich in the gold that with her farewell tears
Thy bounteous mother to my hands consigned,
I for my native country inly pined ;
After my many toils and wanderings wide,
I longed amidst old faces left behind,
In my dear birthplace tranquil to reside,
And spend life's wintry eve at my own warm fireside.

XXXIV.

“ To Egypt then, where first my eyes unclosed,
I took, conducting thee, a secret road,
And reached a flood, to equal risks exposed,—
Here robbers chased me, there the torrent flowed :
What should I do ! resign my cherished load ?
No ! yet how shun the meditated theft ?
A moment's thought hereon when I bestowed,
I braved the stream ; with one bold arm I cleft
Venturous the roaring waves, and bore thee in my left.

XXXV.

“ Swift as an arrow flowed the flood ; midway,
The jangling tides for ever boil and spin ;
There, as a curling snake devours its prey,
The volumed whirlpool gaped, and sucked me in ;
Giddy, tossed round, distracted with the din,
Thence then I missed ; but the wild waves upbore,—
Propitious breezes caught thy garments thin,
And laid thee safe on the smooth sandy shore ;
Which I at length too reached, when hope almost was o'er.

XXXVI.

" With joy I took thee up ; eve's dusky light
 The landscape veiled, when, slumbering on the sand,
 Methought the figure of a frowning knight
 Came near, and pointing at my breast his brand,
 Imperiously exclaimed ; ' No more withstand
 The solemn charge with which thou long hast striven,
 A mother's precept ! christen, I command,
 This babe, the choice inheritant of heaven ; —
 To my peculiar care the orphan child is given.

XXXVII.

" ' 'T was I gave mercy to the' infuriate brute,
 Life to the wind, and mildness to the stream ;
 And woe to thee, if thou my words dispute,
 Or as a vacant phantom disesteem
 The heavenly form I am ! ' with morn's first beam
 I woke, and, shaking off the dews of night,
 Went forward ; but, as false I judged the dream,
 And true my faith, I scrupled not to slight
 The angel's threat, and still withheld the sacred rite ; —

XXXVIII.

" But as a Pagan bred thee, nor revealed
 The secret of thy birth ; whilst thou hast grown
 Valiant in arms, the phoenix of the field,
 And o'er thy sex and Nature's self hast shewn
 Thyself victorious ; hosts hast thou o'erthrown ;
 Won riches, realms, and palms for ever green ; —
 What since has happened, thou thyself hast known ;
 And how in peace, in battle I have been
 Thy sire at once and slave, through each succeeding scene.

XXXIX.

" Last morn a sleep, the simile of death,
 Ere yet the stars had faded from the sky,
 Sank on my soul, and by our holy faith
 Again thy Genius in my sleep passed by ;
 But haughtier was his look, more fierce his cry, —
 ' Traitor ! ' he said, ' the hour to disunite
 Clorinda from the bonds of earth draws nigh ;
 Mine shall she yet become in thy despite ;
 Be thine the woe ! ' — he frowned, and heavenward took his
 flight.

XL.

"Thus, then, be warned! for sadly I suspect
O'er thee, my love, strange accidents impend;
Perhaps the heavens are wroth when we reject
The faith our wise forefathers did commend;
Perhaps that faith is true; oh, condescend,
Deign, I entreat thee, to put off this vest
Of sable, deign thy purpose to suspend!"
He ceased, and wept; fear thrilled her pensive breast,
For on her heart a like remembered vision pressed.

XLI.

But soon her aspect she serenely, and said;
"This faith, which surely strikes my mind as true,
Which thou wouldst have me doubt in thy vain dread,
The faith that with my nurse's milk I drew,
Still will I keep; nor yet resign, (beshrew
The soul that would!) my old heroic spear,
And plighted purpose; no, not if I knew
That Death, with that fierce visage which strikes fear
Into the hearts of men, would dog me as a deer!"

XLII.

She soothes him, smiles on him, and straight retires,
For now the hurrying hours to action call;
And with the dauntless hero who desires
To share her hazard, seeks the palace hall:
Ismeno joins them, and with words of gall
Spurs on the daring hearts that little need
Renewed excitements; gives to each a ball
Of pitch and sulphur; in a hollow reed
Shuts up the fatal flame, and bids them do the deed.

XLIII.

Charged, they depart; and over dale and hill
Circling the valleys, through the darkness scud,
With speed incessant, side by side, until
They near the spot where the vast engine stood;
There high their spirit rises, hot the blood
Boils in their veins; desire and scorn combine
To cheer them on, and in their madding mood,
Drawn are their swords; the watch behold the shine
Of coming arms, and loud demand the passing sign.

XLIV.

Mute they move on ; "To arms !" exclaim the guard ;
Their sudden shouts the valiant couple stun,
But nought their generous enterprise retard,—
They bound abroad, and all concealment shun :
As from the' electric cloud or levelled gun,
At the same instant comes the flash, the thunder,
And bolt of ruin ; so for them to run,
Arrive, strike, penetrate, and cleave asunder
The phalanx, is but one, one moment's work of wonder.

XLV.

Through thousand arms, amidst a thousand blows
They pass, and execute their glorious aim ;
Their glimmering lights secreted they disclose,
And tip the black combustible with flame ;
Tossed, to the tower it fixes ; words are tame
To picture how it creeps, expands, aspires ;
How soon it runs o'er all the timbered frame ;
How thick the smoke, and in what billowy gyres,
Climbs to the lofty stars, and cloaks their shining fires.

XLVI.

Vast globes of fire amid the ceaseless whirl
Of smoke voluminous, now dim, now bright
As the cloud fluctuates, high to heaven upcurl,—
The blustering winds add fury to their flight :
Then join the scattered flames ; a sudden light
Strikes the awed host,—they arm in mute amaze ;
'T is done ! the pile, so terrible in fight,
Sinks in a lofty, broad, columnar blaze ;
And one brief hour destroys the workmanship of days.

XLVII.

Two bands meantime to where the pile is burning
Haste from the Camp ; which when Argantes sees,
He shouts, "Your blood shall quench the fire !" and turning
His sword against them, with wild menaces
Keeps them at bay ; but, yielding by degrees
With fair Clorinda, to the brown hill's bent
Retires, while fast behind the crowds increase,
Like headlong floods which August rains augment ;
Hotly they press the chase, and climb with them the' ascent.

XLVIII.

The Golden Gate turns on its hinge; and there,
With his armed people stands the Turkish King,
Ready to welcome back the dauntless pair,
If favouring fortune should them homeward bring;
High o'er the ruins of the fosse they spring
Before a grove of spears,—the Soldan stout
Gives the known word, the portals wide they fling,
Drive back the Franks, and, wheeling swift about,
Close the strong gates,—alas! these shut Clorinda out.

XLIX.

For at the moment when the Turks let fall
The pendulous portcullis, forth she flew
To wreak her ire on Arimon the tall,
Whose daring sword had cut her hauberk through;
This she revenged, nor yet Argantes knew
That she was separate from his side; the glare
Of steel, the anarchy of fight, the crew
That pressed behind, and denseness of the air,
Wholly his sight confused, distracting every care.

L.

But when her sultry anger she had quenched
In the proud blood of dying Arimon,
Saw the gates closed, and how she stood intrenched,
She deemed Clorinda utterly undone,
And looked alone for death; but soon, as none
Pierced her disguise, fresh hopes of safety rose
With other turns of wit, she feigns her one
Of the same troop, a bold demeanour shews,
And with cool unconcern slips in amidst her foes.

LI.

Then, as the still wolf glides to the green wood,
Conscious of crime, and in close ambush lies;
So, by the tumult favoured, and unviewed,
Through the dun shade of the nocturnal skies,
Discovered from the press, Clorinda flies:
Tancred alone, it seems, the secret knew
Both of her fatal chance and sly device;
Arriving there as Arimon she slew,
He saw her, marked her out, and kept in constant view.

LII.

Her would he fight with, deeming her a man
 Glorious in arms as lively in address ;
 Around the winding ramparts swift she ran,
 In at some other gate to gain access ;
 As swift behind her did the' avenger press ;
 Nor was it long, ere on the gusty breath
 Of the night-wind she heard, with some distress,
 The sound of arms ; whence, turning, " Halt ! " she saith ;
 " What fleet foot news bring'st thou ? " he answered, " War
 and death ! "

LIII.

" War shalt thou have, " said she, " and death, if these
 Are thy request ; " and here her step she stayed ;
 Tancred his steed abandons, when he sees
 His foe on foot, by lonely hills embayed :
 Then she her sabre, he his poignant blade
 Draws from the sheath ; they stand as mortal foes ;
 Wrath nerves the hero, haughtiness the maid ;
 Like two young bulls each smarting with the throes
 Of envy, rage, and love, in desperate strife they close.

LIV.

Worthy of royal lists, and the clear shine
 Of suns would be the battle, if descried ;
 Dark Abbess ! thou that in thy Gothic shrine
 The mouldering relics of their tale dost hide !
 Grant me to lift thy cowl, to waft aside
 The curtain, and in radiant numbers braid
 Their deeds, for endless ages to abide ;
 So with their glory, glorious shall be made,
 In page of high Romance, the memory of thy shade.

LV.

They shrink not, trifle not, strive not to smite
 By artificial rules, with wary will ;
 Stand not on postures or on points, the night
 And their blind rage forbid the tricks of skill ;
 But swords clash horribly with swords, and shrill
 The mountain echo shrieks along the plain ;
 Not a foot stirs, — where stood, there stand they still ;
 But aye their hands in motion they maintain ;
 And not a lounge, or foin, or slash descends in vain.

LVI.

Shame stings disdain to vengeance, vengeance breeds
New shame,—thus passion runs a ceaseless round ;
To spite despite, to rage fresh rage succeeds,
The agony to strike, the lust to wound :
And now the battle blends in narrower ground ;
No room have they to foin, no room to lash ;
Their blades flung back, like butting rams they bound,
Fight with the hilts, wild, savage, raging, rash,
And shield at sounding shield, and helm at helmet dash.

LVII.

Thrice in his boisterous arms the maid he pressed,
And thrice was forced to loose his sinewy clasp ;
She had no fancy to be so caressed ;
Empassioned Love is not an angry asp.
Again with eagerness their swords they grasp,
And tinge them-ruddy as Vesuvian fire,
In blood of many wounds ; till, tired, they gasp
For very breath,—some paces back retire ;
And from their long fatigues all pantingly respire.

LVIII.

Faint on their swords, with like exhausted frame,
- Alike they rest, and echo gaze for gaze :
Fades the last star ; Aurora, robed in flame,
Unbars Elysium, and the morning plays ;
- Tancred perceives, beneath its grateful rays,
From her the trickling blood profusely rain,
And glories in the langour she displays ;
Oh man, vain man ! poor fool of pride and pain !
Puffed up with every breath from Fortune's wavering vane !

LIX.

Why that proud smile ? sad, O how sad, shall be
Thy acted triumphs when the' illusion clears !
Thine eyes shall weep, if still the light they see,
For every drop of blood a sea of tears :
Thus resting, gazing, full of hopes and fears,
The bleeding warriors, silent as the dead,
Stood for a space ; at length some feelings fierce
Tancred deposed,—kind thoughts rose in their stead,
He wished her name to know, and, breaking silence, said ;

LX.

"Hard is our chance, our prowess thus to spend
On deeds which silence and these shades conceal;
To which thwart Fortune yields no praise, no friend
On our viewed acts to set his speaking seal!
Yet, if amid the sullen shock of steel
Prayers may have access, courtesies find place,
Thy name, thy country, and thy rank reveal;
That I, whatever issue crown the case,
May know at least who gives my death or victory grace."

LXI.

Sternly she said; "Thy prayer no access wins;
Custom forbids; but, whatso'er my name,
Thou seest before thee one of those brave twins,
Who gave your towering structure to the flame."
Fired at her answer, Tancred made exclaim;
"In evil hour hast thou thy guilt avowed;
Thy speech and silence are to me the same,
Discourteous wretch, contemptible as proud!
Both chide my sloth, and both for vengeance plead aloud."

LXII.

Rage to their hearts returns, and spurs them on,
Though weak, to war; dire war! from which the sleights
Of art are banished, whence all strength is gone,
And in the room of both, brute fury fights:
Oh, sharp his falchion, sharp her sabre smites!
What bloody gaps they make through plate and chain,
In their soft flesh! revenge, revenge requites;
If life parts not, 'tis only that disdain
Knits it in pure despite to the rebellious brain.

LXIII.

As the deep Euxine, though the wind no more
Blows, that late tossed its billows to the stars,
Stills not at once its rolling and its roar,
But with its coasts long time conflicting jars;
Thus, though their quickly-ebbing blood debars
Force from their blades as vigour from their arms,
Still lasts the frenzy of the flame which Mars
Blew in their breasts; sustained by whose strong charms,
Yet heap they strokes on strokes, yet harms inflict on harms.

LXIV.

But now, alas, the fatal hour arrives
That must shut up Clorinda's life in shade ;
In her fair bosom deep his sword he drives ;
'T is done—life's purple fountain bathes the blade !
The golden-flowered cymar of light brocade,
That swathed so tenderly her breasts of snow,
Is steeped in the warm stream : the hapless maid
Feels her end nigh ; her knees their strength forego ;
And her enfeebled frame droops languishing and low.

LXV.

He, following up the thrust with taunting cries,
Lays the pierced Virgin at his careless feet ;
She, as she falls, in mournful tones sighs,
Her last faint words, pathetically sweet ;
Which a new spirit prompts, a spirit replete
With charity, and faith, and hope serene,
Sent dove-like down from God's pure mercy-seat ;
Who, though through life his rebel she had been,
Would have her die a fond, repentant Magdalene.

LXVI.

" Friend ! thou hast won ; I pardon thee, and O
Forgive thou me ! I fear not for this clay,
But my dark soul—pray for it, and bestow
The sacred rite that laves all stains away :"
Like dying hymns heard far at close of day,
Sounding I know not what in the soothed ear
Of sweetest sadness, the faint words make way
To his fierce heart, and, touched with grief sincere,
Streams from his pitying eye the' involuntary tear.

LXVII.

Not distant, gushing from the rocks, a rill
Clashed on his ear ; to this with eager pace
He speeds—his hollow casque the waters fill—
And back he hurries to the deed of grace ;
His hands as aspens tremble, whilst they raise
The locked aventayle of the unknown knight ;—
God, for thy mercy ! 't is her angel face !
Aghast and thunderstruck, he loathes the light ;
Ah, knowledge best unknown ! ah, too distracting sight !

LXVIII.

Yet still he lived; and, mustering all his powers
To the sad task, restrained each wild lament,
Fain to redeem by those baptismal showers
The life his sword bereft; whilst thus intent
The hallowing words he spoke, with ravishment
Her face transfigured shone, and half apart
Her bland lips shed a lively smile that sent
This silent speech in sunshine to his heart:
"Heaven gleams; in blissful peace behold thy friend depart!"

LXIX.

A paleness beauteous as the lily's mixt
With the sweet violet's, like a gust of wind
Flits o'er her face; her eyes on Heaven are fixt,
And Heaven on her returns its looks as kind:
Speak she can not; but her cold hand, declined,
In pledge of peace on Tancred she bestows;
And to her fate thus tenderly resigned,
In her meek beauty she expires, and shews
But as a smiling saint indulging soft repose.

LXX.

But when he saw her starlike spirit set,
The self-possession which had manned his soul,
Bent to the storm of anguishing regret
That o'er his bosom burst beyond control:
Pangs of despair convulsed his heart; life stole
As to its last recess; death's icy dew
Bathed his pale brow, his blood forebore to roll;
Till like the breathless dead the living grew,
In chillness, silence, air, and attitude, and hue.

LXXI.

And sure his life, impatient of the light,
Struggling had burst in its rebellious scorn
From its weak chain, and followed in its flight
The beauteous spirit, that, but just reborn,
Had spread its wings in sunshine of the morn,—
Had not a party of the Franks, dispread
In search of water o'er the gleaming lawn,
By providential guidance thither led,
Seen where he lay supine, the dying by the dead.

LXXII.

Their Chief, though distant, by his armour knew
The Latin Prince, and hastened to the place ;
The lifeless beauty he remembered too
For Tancred's love, and mourned her fatal case ;
He would not leave a form so full of grace,
Albeit a Pagan, as he deemed, a prey
To wolves, but lifting, in a little space,
To others' arms both bodies whence they lay,
Took straight to Tancred's tent his melancholy way.

LXXIII.

Not yet the knight, so equably and slow
They marched, from his dark trance awakened was ;
But feeble groans at intervals might shew
Some sands still glided in his vital glass ;
The Lady lay a mute and stirless mass,
Nor breath, nor pulse gave hope that life was there
Incorporate with its beauty: thus they pass ;
Thus, side by side, the two, lamenting, bear ;
And in adjoining rooms dispose with silent care.

LXXIV.

His pitying squires drew nigh ; with busy pain
Chafed his chill temples, and his mail unbound ;
His languid eyes at length he oped again,
Felt the physician's hand, the smarting wound,
And heard, yet dubious of his sense, the sound
Of whispering lips,—where was he, and with whom ?
Long with bewildered gaze he looked around ;
At length his squires, at length he knew the room,
And in low feeble words lamented thus his doom :

LXXV.

" Yet do I breathe? yet live to view the beams
Of this curst day, more odious than the shade?
Clear witness of my blind misdeed, it streams
To' accuse my rashness, and my guilt upbraid:
Ah, coward hand! why now art thou afraid,
Thou, so well versed in all the turns of strife,
The impious minister of death repaid
In infamy, to grasp the vengeful knife,
And cut the pall-black thread of this opprobrious life!

LXXVI.

"Take the fell steel, and hide it to the hilt
Within me,—my sad heart in sunder cleave!
But thou, perhaps, inured to deeper guilt,
May'st deem it mercy such quick ease to give:
Then as a dire example let me live,
Monster of luckless Love! a mark for men
To point at, and abhor; this base reprieve
To shameful life will be the' alone fit pain
For such enormous guilt, and of so dark a grain.

LXXVII.

"Vext by just Furies, anguish, grief, and care,
A wandering maniac must I live—to run,
Shrieking, from phantoms with which sleep shall scare
My soul, when Night her orgies has begun;
To hold in horror and in hate the Sun,
That did my fatal error shew; to eye
Myself with fear, and strive myself to shun;—
Evermore flying, evermore to fly,
Whilst hell's pursuing fiends are ever howling nigh!"

LXXVIII.

"But where, alas, where lie the relics chaste
Of my slain angel? what my cruel scorn
Left whole, perchance some savage of the waste—
The lion mangles, or the wolf has torn;
Ah spoils, for them too rich! dear beauty, born
To different end! too sweet, too precious fruit!
Poor injured maiden! whom the shades forlorn
And lone hills have betrayed, first in dispute
To me, and next in prey to some ferocious brute.

LXXIX.

"Yet will I go, and the loved spoils collect;
Dear limbs! where late the hues of beauty bloomed;
But if the wolf, in hungry disrespect,
Those virgin relics has indeed consumed,
In the same cavern let me be entombed,
Let the same jaws ingulph me! hailed by me
Will the stroke come; but, preyed on or inhumed,
A glorious sepulchre, my love, 't will be,
Where'er thy bones are cast, to be inurned with thee!"

LXXX.

But being told that her lamented form
Lay in his tent, a beam of joy appeared,
Like lightning flashing through a sable storm,
To light his aspect, and the darkness cleared ;
Straight from the couch of his repose he reared
The heavy burden of his limbs, and slow—
Weak as an infant, full of pain, but cheered
By her dear image, thither strove to go,
On frail unsteady steps, loose staggering to and fro.

LXXXI.

But when he came, and in her beauteous breast
Saw the red gash his murderous hand had made,
And her late radiant aspect calmed to rest,
Like a nocturnal sky, in livid shade,—
His heightening colour was perceived to fade ;
A trembling ague rocked his frame; and there
Would he have sunk, but for immediate aid ;
“Sweet face!” he sighed, “thou canst make death look fair,
But hast not power to soothe, or sweeten my despair!

LXXXII.

“Fair hand! dear pledge of pardoning amity!
Late forceful pleader, uttering love’s farewell!
What do I find thee now? ah, what am I!
And you, light limbs, that did in flight excel
The graceful motions of the fleet gazelle,
What but upbraiding vestiges are ye
Of my irreparable rage? too well
My stony eyes and cruel hand agree,
When, what the one destroyed, the other brooks to see;—

LXXXIII.

“And see without a tear! then weep, my blood,
Since my remorseless eyes to weep forbear!”
Frantic he spoke; and in his madding mood,
Strong with desire of death, began to tear
His hands away, and to his nails laid bare
Each irritated wound,—the blood like rain
Gushed forth, and in this fit of wild despair
He must have died, had not excess of pain
Caused him to swoon away, and life perforce retain.

LXXXIV.

Borne to his bed again, his fluttering sprite
Back to its hated mansion they reclaim ;
The dire mischance and anguish of the knight
This while was widely spread by babbling fame ;
And thither came the Chief ; and thither came,
With his loved friends, the Solitary Sage ;
But neither grave admonishment could tame,
Nor pity soothe, nor gentlest prayers assuage
Of his distracted grief the stubbornness and rage.

LXXXV.

As in a tender limb the serpent's sting,
With oils fomented, doth the keener smart ;
So their kind solaces of love but bring
Acuter pangs to his afflicted heart !
But reverend Peter, who the faithful part
Of a good shepherd ever undertook
With his sick flock, blest counsels to impart,
His long romantic passion would rebuke,
And from its frenzied trance his wilful spirit shook :

LXXXVI.

" O Tancred ! Tancred ! how unlike that mind,
Whose first unfoldings did so bright appear !
What cloud, what darkness does thy vision blind,
What sorcery shuts thy intellectual ear ?
This thy sore trouble is instruction clear
Sent from the Lord ; dost thou not see the ray
That would direct thy feet ? dost thou not hear
The voice that calls thee to the safer way,
Wherein thou first didst walk, whence now thy footsteps
stray ?

LXXXVII.

" To actions worthy thy first love, his voice
Recalls thee, vowed to this divine crusade ;
Which thou hast left (unwise, unworthy choice !)
For the blind worship of a Pagan maid.
Happy misfortune ! Heaven on thee has laid
In tenderest clemency its chastening rod ;
Thy fault, thyself has it the agent made
Of thine own good ; and is it in this mode
That thou the gift receiv'st, and own'st the grace bestowed ?

LXXXVIII.

"Scorn'st thou then, ingrate, the salubrious gift
Of God, with God incensed? unhappy! think
Whither this angry whirlwind bears thee—swift
O'er dark Eternity's tremendous brink;
Down the deep precipice about to sink,
Thou hang'st at mercy of the slenderest breath;
Call, I entreat, call back thy senses, shrink
From the momentous danger, look beneath,
And curb this impious woe, that leads to endless death!"

LXXXIX.

That second death the sufferer's soul alarmed,
And, all relinquishing his wish to die,
Their soothing words he entertained, and calmed
The hurricane within; yet still a sigh—
A groan at times escaped; by fits his eye
Would weep, and his sad tongue lament aloud,
Now holding with himself wild colloquy,
Now with his love, who from some rosy cloud
To his fond plaints perchance an ear of pity bowed.

XC.

On her at smile of morn, for her at frown
Of eve he calls, he murmurs, and complains;
Like a lorn nightingale when some rude clown
Has stol'n her plumeless brood; in piercing strains
She fills the dying winds, and woods, and plains
With her sweet quarrel; all night long she weeps,
And to the listening stars repeats her pains,
Till morn with rosy tears the forest steeps;—
Then on his streaming eyes awhile calm slumber creeps.

XCI.

And, clad in starry robes, the maid for whom
He mourned, appears amid his morning dreams;
Fairer than erst, but by the deathless bloom
And heavenly radiance that around her beams,
Graced, not disguised; in sweetest act she seems
To stoop, and wipe away the tears that flow
From his dim eyes: "Behold what glory streams
Round me," she cries; "how beauteous now I shew,
And for my sake, dear friend, this waste of grief forego!"

XCII.

"Thee for my bliss I thank ; Earth's sordid clod
Thou by a happy error forced to quit,
And for the glorious Paradise of God
By sacred baptism mad'st my spirit fit :
There now midst angels and blest saints I sit,
In rapturous love and fellowship divine ;
There may our souls together yet be knit,
And there in fields where suns eternal shine,
Shalt thou at once enjoy their loveliness and mine ;—

XCIII.

"If by thy passions unseduced, if thou
Grudge not thyself the bliss ; live then, Sir Knight,
Know that I love thee, far as Love can bow
For aught of earthly mould a Child of Light ! "
As thus she spoke, her glowing eyes shone bright
With an immortal's fervour,—rosy red,
She in the mild irradiance shut from sight
Her face, like a sweet flower, her fans outspread,
And in his drooping soul celestial comfort shed.

XCIV.

Soothed he awoke, and to the hands discreet
Of skilled practitioners his wounds resigned ;
The whilst his friends interred, with spices sweet,
The limbs late vital with so great a mind :
And if the tomb to which they were consigned
Was not of pure Pentelican, nor graced
With sculptures planned by architects refined,
The stone was choice, and wrought with all the taste
The urgent time allowed, in form antequely chaste.

XCV.

There by bright lamps that in long order shine,
With many a dirge, her bones in earth they lay ;
And on the smooth trunk of a leafless pine
Her arms, hung round with cypress and with bay,
In trophy to her fame aloft display ;
And thither did the Prince his footsteps turn
All languid as he was, at break of day,
With awe and melancholy calm concern,
Unseen her grave to view, and clasp her revered urn.

XCVI.

When reached the tomb, his spirit's dolorous gaol,
Prescribed by Heaven's inscrutable decree,
Long on the pile, mute, motionless and pale,
His hollow eyes in absent reverie
He fixed: at length to his relief a sea
Of tears gushed forth; and, gathering voice, he said,
His accents prefaced with a sigh; "Oh ye
So loved, so honoured tablets of the dead,
In which my soul abides, o'er which my tears are shed!—

XCVII.

"Not of unliving dust are ye the shrine,
But Love's quick ashes, canonized by woe;
From you I catch his wonted fires divine,
Less sweet, less grateful, but as warm they glow;
Take the sad sighs and kisses I bestow,
Bathed in the fondest tears that ever blessed
The grave of luckless beauty; take, and O
Convey each sigh breathed forth, each kiss impressed,
To the beloved remains that in your bosom rest!

XCVIII.

"For if to her fair spoils that fairest Saint
E'er gives a glance, thy pity and my love
Will not offend; since, neither can the taint
Of scorn or hatred reach the blest above;
She who forgave my crime, can ne'er reprove
My zeal,—this hope alone my tears can dry;
It was, she knows, my hand alone that drove
The murdering sword; nor can it irk that I,
Who lived adoring her, adoringly should die.

XCIX.

"And die adoring her I shall; blest day,
Whenever it arrives! but far more blest,
If as now round thy polished sides I stray,
I then be taken to thy sacred breast!
Ah! let our blending souls together rest
In heaven, our ashes in the self-same tomb!
If I by death be of the bliss possessed
Which life denied me,—might I but presume
This, this to hope indeed, delightful were my doom!"

C.

Meanwhile in Salem, of Clorinda's fall
At first confused and floating whispers rise ;
Till, ascertained and soon divulged, through all
The' astonished City the loud rumour flies,
Mingled with tears, and shrieks, and women's cries ;
As though the town itself, the sacred town,
Were now by storm become the victor's prize ;
And in the rage of flying flames went down
Their temples, spires, abodes, and towers of old renown.

CI.

But every eye was on Arsetes turned,
Who stood, a piteous spectacle of care ;
He not as others his dear mistress mourned ;
His eyeballs, stony with supreme despair,
Shed not a tear ; but fiercely did he tear
His face, his bosom, and with ashes strowed
The hoary honours of his silver hair :
As thus he drew the' attention of the crowd,
Midst them Argantes came, and thus harangued aloud :

CII.

" Much did I wish, when conscious that the gate
Was closed against the' incomparable maid,
To follow straight,—I ran to share her fate,
Protect her life, or be beside her laid ;
What did I not? what said I not? I prayed,
Adjured the King, by all that was most dear,
To' unbar the gates : he, of the Franks afraid,
Denied my suit, though tendered with a tear ;
And, men of Syria! he has sole dominion here.

CIII.

" Ah! had I then gone forth, or safe from strife
I the brave heroine had brought off, or closed
Where she has made earth purple, my sad life
In memorable decease, a glorious ghost!
But what could I do more? the starry host,
And counsels both of Gods and men were set
In adverse influence, to my wish opposed ;
Cold in her grave the Virgin lies ; but yet,
There are some mournful dues which I will ne'er forget.

CIV.

"Hear, all Jerusalem, my vow! Heaven, hear!
And, if I fail my promise to fulfil,
Blast me with fire! deep, deep revenge I swear,
On the base Frank that did Clorinda kill!
Never from battle shall my sword lie still,
However fully fleshed upon the foe;
Ne'er be dissevered from my side, until
I stab curst Tancred to the heart, and throw
His ruffian carcase out, to feed the hound and crow!"

CV.

The warrior ceased; and to his fierce harangue
From the soothed crowds applauding shouts succeed;
Hushed their sore weeping, lost is every pang,
In the mere fancy of the' expected deed.
O blind, presumptuous vow! far different seed
Than flowering hope imagines, to his scythe
Time will devote; thyself, thyself shalt bleed,
In equal battle bleed, and dying writhe
Beneath his sword o'er whom thou now exultest blithe!

END OF CANTO XII.



JERUSALEM DELIVERED.

CANTO XIII.





Stanza xlii.

ARGUMENT.

ISMENO frees the Demons of the Deep
 To guard the forests; the mere sight of these,
 Scares from the regions they are set to keep,
 The men who come to cut the shady trees :
 There Tancred boldly ventures, and with ease
 Enters the grove, but foolish love o'erpowers
 His shew of courage; meanwhile not a breeze
 Stirs,—heat, excessive heat the earth devours,
 And the sick camp decays, till blest with copious showers.

JERUSALEM DELIVERED.

CANTO XIII.

I.

SCARCE was the vast, tower-tempesting machine
To ashes sunk, than, further to secure
The City respited from storm, Ismene
New artifices planned, by rites impure,
And added spells tremendous, to ensure
The army's ruin, and prevent the fall
Of fresh materials from the groves obscure :
That so, no second store of engines tall
Might Sion's gates bombard, or rend her sacred wall.

II.

Near the encampment of the Christians, grows,
Mid solitary valleys, old and vast,
A forest, thick with mossy trees, whose boughs
A solemn horror far in compass cast :
There, when the golden sun at noon rides past
In clearest glory, a discoloured light,
Malignant, such as falls from skies o'ercast,
When night with day, or day disputes with night,
Streams through its hoary glades, and daunts the uncertain
sight.

III.

But when the sun departs, immediate clouds,
And horror, black as hell, the place invade ;
Darkness — which blinds the vision, and which crowds
The heart with fears ; for pasture or for shade,
There never goatherd drives his goats, dismayed,
Herdsman his herds ; there never shepherds sound
Their lively reeds ; nor in its nodding glade
Enter faint pilgrims, but, with awe profound,
Point as they pass, and shun far-off the' unlucky ground.

IV.

Here at deep midnight, borne on clouds and storms,
Foul witches gather to their blasted green,
Each with her mate, and take the frightful forms
Of dragon, pard, or bearded goat obscene ;
A council loathsome, infamous, unclean ;
That oft with false presentments and delights,
Allure from goodness : hither they convene,
To hold in pomp, by Hecate's pale lights,
Their impious marriage feasts and bacchanalian rites.

V.

So goes belief ; and from its haunted bowers
Nor bough nor twig the natives ever rent ;
But these the Franks, since for their rams and towers
None others served, invade with one consent.
Here now the Sorcerer came, malevolent,
At next dead noon of night,—the hour that best
Suits his black science : not a whisper went
Through the wild woods, when, wrapt in coal-black vest,
His magic rounds he traced, his mystic signs impressed.

VI.

One naked foot he in the charmed ring
Set, murmuring mighty rhymes ; nor failed to turn
Thrice to the clime whence first the sunbeams spring,
Thrice to the region gaped where last they burn :
Thrice shook the wand that from the dreary urn
Calls buried phantoms, to walk forth again
Incorporate ; three times, gloomily and stern,
Stamped with his foot unshod : then spake he ; then,
Ran these tremendous words through each rebelling glen :

VII.

“ Hear ! hear, O ye, whom from the stars of yore
God's flashing thunders smote to deepest hell !
Hear, ye that walk the clouds ! hear, ye that pour
The storms abroad, and in the whirlwinds yell !
And you, dark elves of fog, of fire, and fell,
Demons, and ghosts, and demogorgons dire !
Hear, all ye devils that in Avernus dwell,
Grim torturers of the damned ! and Thou, their sire,
King of lost kings, that rul'st the shadowy world of fire !

VIII.

"Guard well these groves: elm, cedar, ivy, oak,
I give you told and chronicled aright;
As souls of men in bodies, I invoke
You so to haunt their branches, every sprite;
Chase back with fury, or at least affright
The' insulting Christians, soon as they essay
To reach and fell them!" many an impious rite,
Fell charm and dreary spell the Wizard grey
Joined, which 't were sin to hear, and blasphemy to say.

IX.

At these fell words each bright star that adorns
The blue of midnight, quenched its fires divine;
The moon, disturbed, drew in her golden horns,
Cloked in black clouds, nor after dared to shine:
Incensed he turns, with aspect more malign,
And stamping shouts; "Not yet do ye appear,
Charged spirits? each to his appointed shrine!
Why this delay? perchance ye wait to hear
Voices more potent yet, and curses more severe!

X.

"I have not yet forgot, from long disuse,
My cruel arts of more effectual fame;
This tongue, I know, can, blooded o'er, break loose
With perfect ease from its control, and frame
That so tremendous sound, that mighty Name,
Which heard, e'en Pluto must start up dismayed,
And hither hurry from his throne of flame;
Which! oh, which if—" more yet he would have said,
But that he inly knew the summons was obeyed.

XI.

Infinite spirits numberless come down;
All that through air on Hell's drear errands flee,—
Ghosts of the' abyss, and elves from forests brown,
From cave, mine, fountain, fire, and roaring sea:
Slow, and still trembling at the late decree
Prohibiting from battle, comes, and grieves
The universal swarm; but, bound to be
Seals of the' enchantment, each his charge receives,
Shrined in the mossy trunks, grey boughs, or fluttering
leaves.

XII.

Strait to the King the Sorcerer, when aware
That the protecting charm was now complete,
Hied and exclaimed: "Leave every doubt and care;
Thy heart refresh, and of enjoyment treat!
Henceforth in safety stands thy regal seat;
For never shall the Franks have power or heart
Their engines to renew,—so brave a feat
Have I performed;" thus glorying, part by part
He the success narrates of his mysterious art:—

XIII.

Then thus continues: "With my spell the stars
Themselves are charmed, to my no less delight;
Know, that in heavenly Leo raging Mars
Must with the splendid sun erewhile unite
In blest conjunction, and with fever smite
The hostile armies; nought shall cool the glow,—
Winds, airs, nor rains by day, nor dews by night;
Since all the Influences in heaven foreshew
A time of burning heat,—pain, wailing, want, and woe.

XIV.

"Drought more intolerable than e'er distressed
Ind, or adust Zahara! us the heat
Will little harm, within a town so blest
With cool delights—fresh shades, and fountains sweet:
But most the sunbeams on our foes will beat;
Who, stretched on sands insufferable as they,
Denied refreshment, hopeless of retreat,
Will to the Egyptians fall an easy prey,
First smit by Heaven, then swept like locusts clean away.

XV.

"Thou, sitting still, shalt conquer; 't were not wise
To tempt of Fortune then the doubtful smile;
But if the rash Circassian, who decries
All, even honourable repose, revile,
And importune thee in his usual style,
Find thou the means his wilfulness to rein;
Since Heaven's kind Sovereign shall to thee erewhile
Send peace, and to thy foes, consumed with pain,
The sword which, smiting once, need never smite again.

XVI.

Soothed by this speech, the King recovers heart,
And the whole force of Godfrey inly mocks;
He had already well repaired in part
The walls late shattered by the ram's rude shocks;
The rest with iron cramps and mortised blocks
He now secures; nor yet his cares relax;
Round him the total population flocks,—
Freeman, liege, slave,—on all he lays the tax
Of hard, unceasing toil; and warm their labours wax.

XVII.

Meantime the pious Prince resolved no more
To storm by force of arms the strengthened town,
Till rams and towers yet mightier than before,
Should with more sure success his prospects crown;
He therefore sent his soldiers to cut down
Fresh timber for the work: at morning light
They go; in mist the silent forests frown,—
But scarce their sable skirts appear in sight,
Than awe arrests their steps, and fills their souls with fright.

XVIII.

As boys on ivied towers and haunted rooms
At fall of twilight dare not cast an eye,
Fancy a ghost in every thing that glooms,
And, hair on end, from the grim fancy fly:
So when beyond the hills these men desory
The hoar wood nodding to the wind's light wings,
Alarmed, they turn and flee; unconscious why,
Unless that fear before their senses brings
Goblins, chimeras, ouphes, and all unholy things.

XIX.

Back they return, sad, timid, trembling, pale,
Their words confused and various as their fears;
That not a soldier entertains their tale,
But turns to mirth the monstrous things he hears.
Indulgent Godfrey of his cavaliers
Sends a choice troop, in shining arms arrayed,
Who, faced with boldness, strengthening with their spears
The men from harm, might their faint-souls persuade
To do his late commands, and pierce the tangled shade.

XX.

Approaching where, in blackest seats embowered
Of savage shade, the wicked fiends fulfil
The wizard's charge, the gloomy forest lowered
In sight,—they tremble, and their blood runs chill;
Yet onward they proceed, concealing ill
Their vile dismay beneath a lively face;
In sinuous windings they descend the hill;
And have so far advanced, that little space
Separates their footsteps now from off the enchanted place.

XXI.

Sudden a sound comes from the wood, as when
Earth yawns, towers tremble, steadfast mountains quake,
South winds repine in Autumn's yellow glen,
And murmuring billows on the shingles break :
The lion's roar, the hissings of the snake,
The night-wolf's howls are heard, the bear's low moans :
Trumpets and thunders, whisperings that awake
Hideous alarms, and melancholy groans—
All speak in that one sound, though under various tones.

XXII.

The cheeks of all grew pale as death; their fear
A thousand guilty signs declared too plain;
Nor discipline could nerve, nor reason cheer,—
They neither could advance, nor durst remain :
Weak were their efforts, their protection vain
Against the secret influence that confused
Their pride, their courage, and their self-disdain;
At length they fled: their boldest, introduced
To Godfrey's presence, spoke, and thus their flight excused.

XXIII.

"Signior! not one of us can longer vaunt-
The power or will those guarded woods to fell :
Spirits, I swear, possess each moving plant;
There grisly Pluto has transferred all hell.
The heart that fearless ventures where they dwell,
Must be of diamond, diamond to the core;
But none save madmen, scornful of the spell
That guards the entrance, would the depths explore,
So loud the savage grove rebellows to their roar."

XXIV.

Thus went his tale. Among the curious crowd
That gathered round, by chance Alcasto stood,
Who both at death and danger laughed aloud,
Rash, stupid, stern, and obstinate of mood ;
Not the wild lion roaring o'er his brood,
Nor aught that seems tremendous to mankind,
Ghost, dragon, murderer, wizard of the wood,
Lightning, nor earthquake could appal his mind,
Nor aught that haunts the flood, or walks the roaring wind.

XXV.

He tossed his haughty head, and smiling cried ;
" Thither whence this man shrinks let me repair ;
I will invade the peopled wood with pride,
Despite its hollow sounds and shapes of air :
No grinning goblin shall my spirit scare,
Nor roar of boughs around, nor scream o'erhead
Of savage birds ; most freely will I dare
Its frightful glooms and tangled paths to tread,
Though through the throat of hell descending to the dead."

XXVI.

He waved his armed hand, and with a proud
Contempt stalked off ; the wood was soon in view ;
Soon the strange roar was heard, rebellowing loud,
The timbrels rang, the dreary trumpets blew :
Yet not a step the' audacious man withdrew ;
Secure and scornful as at first, he sought
An open glade of pine and spreading yew ;
The charmed soil he trod,—when, swift as thought,
Upsprang a guardian fire, and with the' intruder fought.

XXVII.

Wide and aloft the smoking fires extend,
And, in the form of high embattled walls,
Gird the green wood and from his blade defend,
That not the slenderest branch or sapling falls ;
The loftier flames roll into gorgeous halls
Fantastically towered, and fortified
With warlike engines darting sulphurous balls,
To guard this new Gehenna ; whilst, more wide,
Rocks climbed the clouds, with gold and burning crimson
dyed.

XXVIII.

O, what strange monsters, armed, in guard appear
 On the tall battlements! a hideous row!
 Glare with their Gorgon eyes, and frequent rear
 Their clashing arms, with many a menaced blow!
 At length he fled; and though his flight was slow
 As the grim lion's when in distant chase
 Held by the hunter, still he fled the foe;
 Sad fear—till then a thing unknown, found place
 Within his boisterous heart, and paled his daring face.

XXIX.

Nor was he conscious that he fled, e'en yet;
 But when to distance he had gone, disdain—
 A wild amazement, anguishing regret,
 And deep repentance stung his fretful brain:
 Crimsoning 'twixt shame and grief, he passed the plain;
 Turned from the crowd his devious steps aside;
 And, stealing to his tent, essayed in vain
 From human eyes his downcast face to hide—
 That face, so late the seat of all-despising pride.

XXX.

To Godfrey called, he lingers, makes delays,
 And tries to shun the summons, all he can;
 Forced, he at length arrives, but nothing says,
 Or wildly babbles like a sleeping man:
 Well in his faltering speech, and face now wan,
 Now flushed with shame unusual, Godfrey saw
 Flight and defeat; and "How," he thus began,
 "Is this? or is it witchcraft strikes this awe,
 Or Nature's high portents, transcending Nature's law?"

XXXI.

"But if there yet be one whose noble breast
 To pierce the grove with brave ambition beats,
 Free let him try the' adventure, and at least
 Bring news more certain from its dark retreats."
 Thus spake the Duke: and thrice those savage seats
 Were tried, successive days, at his desire,
 By chiefs most famed for high romantic feats;
 Yet forced, yet fain was each one to retire,
 Scared by the sounds, the sights, the monsters, and the fire.

XXXII.

This chanced whilst Tancred paid the last sad rite
To his loved lady : weak he was, and pale ;
His eyes still sickened at the cheerful light,
His steps were feeble, and his members frail ;
Ill could he bear the weight of helm or mail ;
Yet now, since all his wished assistance claim,
Nor toil deters him, nor can danger quail ;
Warm to his heart fresh life with courage came,
New strung his sinewy joints, and fortified his frame.

XXXIII.

He, silent, calm, collecting all his soul,
Fearless, yet heedful, sought the forest vast ;
And the drear aspect of the wood, the roll
Of thunder, clouds, the earthquake and the blast,
Firmly sustained, amazed, but not aghast ;—
His heart a little moment beat more high,
But sank as soon ; and forward still he passed :
When, sudden, in the sylvan region nigh,
The fiery city rose, whose turrets touched the sky.

XXXIV.

Back stept the Prince, and made a moment's pause,
Inly debating : " What will arms serve here ?
In the devouring flames and monsters' jaws
Shall I leap headlong then ? yet wherefore fear !
Ne'er will the brave man count his life too dear,
When public good the sacrifice demands ;
But neither will he draw too rashly near
The scene where Ruin with a hundred hands
Deals death ; and surely such, is this which here expands.

XXXV.

" Yet, if I fly, what will our armies say ?
What other forest can they hope to fell ?
Will Godfrey cease the' adventure to essay ?
And shall another break the' unholy spell ?
This fire, although the simile of hell,
May be in fact less fierce, by fiends prepared
To daunt, not harm ;—whichever way, 't is well ;
Let the worst come !" this said, with blade unbared,
He through the' eruption leaped,—O, risk divinely dared !

XXXVI.

He felt no raging heat, no fervent glow,
His arms undimmed, unscorched his naked face;
If real flame, or glittering fairy show,
He knew not rightly, in so short a space;
For, soon as touched, the visionary blaze—
Turrets, domes, towers, and apparitions drear,
Melted in mist, blue mist, that in their place
Brought glooms and clouds; the wind and tempest near
Hailed, thundered, howled,—dispersed, and heaven again
shone clear.

XXXVII.

Amazed, but still intrepid, Tancred stood;
And, when the echoing storm at distance died,
Trode with slow steps secure the' unhallowed wood,
And all its hoary scenes and secrets eyed;
No farther signs or prodigies he spied;
Nor elf before, nor goblin glared behind;
Nought gave prevention, access nought denied,
Save the grey trees, that, thickly intertwined,
His steps entangled oft, and oft his sight confined.

XXXVIII.

He reached at length a fair and spacious plot,
Shaped like a circus; in whose centre, waved
One single tree—a cypress, that upshot
Like a green pyramid to heaven, and braved
The winds with beauty; sweetest flowerets paved
The mossy floor: the prospect he perused;
Advanced, and saw on the smooth rind engraved,
Symbols like those mysterious Egypt used,
Long ere her graphic art young Greece had introduced.

XXXIX.

Mid these dark types, some Syriac words appeared,
A tongue to him familiar,—thus they ran;
“O thou, who in these aisles of death hast dared
To place thy glorying foot, audacious man!
Ah! if thou be not under pity's ban,
Cruel as bold, disquiet not, nor tread
This secret seat; but, if thy spirit can,
Pardon the hapless souls to darkness wed;
Why shouldst thou come to fight,—the living with the dead!”

XL.

Thus spake the' inscription : whilst in pensive mood
He sought their mystic sense, he heard behind,
Amidst the leaves of the enchanted wood
And weeping boughs above, the serious wind
Frame a low melancholy dirge, that pined
Sadly harmonious, sounding in his ear
Like human sighs ; a sound, that in his mind
Instilled I know not what confusedly dear
Of pity, pain divine, sweet grief, and sweeter fear.

XLI.

He drew his sword at length, and with full force
Struck the tall tree ; O wonderful ! the wound,
As bursts a fountain from its sylvan source,
Gushed forth with blood, and crimsoned all the ground.
Chill horror seized the knight : yet, fixed to sound
The mystery to its depth, and desperate grown,
Again he struck ; when, hollow and profound, }
As from a vaulted grave, in piteous tone,
Murmuring he heard within a spirit deeply moan.

XLII.

" Too much already, Tancred, has thy blade
Wronged me ! " the sad voice feebly made exclaim ;
" My late so happy home didst thou invade,
And rudely drive my spirit from the frame,
In and through which it lived : why wilt thou maim
Still the poor trunk to which my doom unblest
Binds me ? can wrath so far the heart inflame,
Cruel ! that in their shrouds thou must molest
Thy foes, when Death has sealed, and reverences their rest ?

XLIII.

" I was Clorinda : nor does her sad sprite
Alone in heart of oak or cypress dwell :
But every other Frank or Pagan knight,
That before Salem in proud battle fell,
Is here by magic's most mysterious spell
Immanacled, I know not if to say
In vital body, or funereal cell ;
With sense the trunks, with life the branches play ;
And thou a murderer art, if thou one sapling slay."

XLIV.

As a sick man, that in his sleep perceives
Some fiery dragon or chimera grim;
Though he suspects, or firmly e'en believes
That the whole show is but a feverish dream,
Yet strives to fly, with many a shriek and scream,
Such fright the dire and horrid semblance breeds!
So, though the enamoured knight cannot but deem
False the sad voice that for his pity pleads,
He yet the illusion fears; and trembles, and recedes.

XLV.

At once pain, pity, love, fear, grief, surprise,
Rush o'er his heart; half frenzied, and unmanned,
Cold on his brow the dew of horror lies,
And the sword falls from his relaxing hand:
He sees in thought his murdered lady stand,
Weeping, imploring him with groans to spare
Her suffering tree, and sheathe his dreadful brand;
Nor can his harrowed fancy longer bear
To view her gushing blood, and hear her piteous prayer.

XLVI.

Thus he on whose brave heart no blind alarm
Of danger or of death could e'er intrude,
Powerless and soft alone at Love's deep charm,
A spirit false did with vain complaints delude:
Meanwhile a whirlwind, roaring from the wood,
Caught up his sword, and bore it out of ken
Through the dark grove; the warrior, thus subdued,
At length retired; and from the bosky glen
Issuing, his falchion found, and gladly grasped again.

XLVII.

Yet durst he not return, to pierce anew
Of these mysterious bowers the shadowy screen,
But as to Godfrey's presence near he drew,
Called back his spirits, and composed his mien;
Then thus addressed him: "Listen! I have seen
Things passing all belief; things which to you
Will sound like fables! of the forest green
The tales you have been told—the dreary view,
And loud appalling sounds, in every point are true.

XLVIII.

"First rose a wondrous fire, self-kindled, bright,
 Rose in an instant, building high and wide
 Towers, whereon, armed and shielded for the fight,
 Whole hosts of monsters all access denied :
 Yet these I passed, unharmed, unterrified
 Or by the brandished blades, or volumed train
 Of the fierce flames,—they vanished, when defied :
 Night fell, winds roared, rain dashed ; but straight again
 Day smiled, the winds were hushed, and sunshine chased
 the rain.

XLIX.

"Yet more ! with feeling, life, and speech endued,
 A human spirit in each tree is shrined ;
 I heard one feebly wailing in the wood,
 That wild, sad voice, still, still it haunts my mind :
 Whilst, as though actual flesh the members lined
 Of every hoary trunk and sapling spray,
 Blood at each stroke ran trickling from the rind ;
 I own myself subdued, nor dare essay
 Again the bark to strip, or rend one branch away."

L.

Whilst thus he speaks, a tide of tossing thought
 Absorbs the soul of Godfrey ; what if he
 In his own person the enchantment sought,
 And with his sceptre made those demons flee,
 Which, as he judged, by power of sorcery
 Possessed the forest ! or should he provide
 Elsewhere his timbers, which perchance might be,
 If from a distance, with more ease supplied ?
 Him from this trance of thought the Hermit roused, and cried :

LI.

"Forego thy daring fancy : other hands
 Must from yon forest cut the charmed trees ;
 Lo, on the far, the solitary sands
 Grates the doomed bark, and gathers from the breeze
 Her golden sails ! from loose inglorious ease,
 Love's siren chains, and zoneless Beauty's bribes,
 The' expected Knight his captive spirit frees ;
 And soon will come the time which Heaven prescribes
 For Sion's destined fall, despite her guardian tribes !"

LII.

He spake with voice seraphic ; whilst his face
Shone with a light approaching to divine :
Godfrey to his prophetic words gave place,
And turned his thoughts, which never lie supine,
To other projects ; but the radiant sign
Of Cancer now receives the sun, which foils
His schemes, and traverses each wise design ;
Heat, unremitted heat the clime embroils,
And wearying, quite unfits his host for martial toils.

LIII.

The' Elysian Pleiads quench their friendly lamps ;
In heaven's blue sphere swart planets tyrannise ;
Whence streams an influence, that informs, and stamps
On air the' impression of their baleful dies ;
More and more sultry grow the noxious skies ;
Yet wide and wider sickness sheds its seeds ;
More mortal heats descend, and vapours rise ;
To torturing day more torturing night succeeds ;
Aed still the next, and next, superior mischief breeds.

LIV.

The glimmering Sun ne'er issues from the deep,
But roseate mists his angry face enclose ;
Ne'er sets, but tears of blood his eye-balls weep,—
Tears, of a tincture that too well foreshews
A melancholy morrow doomed to close
With the like drops, sweat from his sanguine veins ;
Threatening to rise more fierce than last he rose,
And sharpening thus the sufferings each sustains,
With long foretasted griefs, and dread of future pains.

LV.

Then when at noon he darts his radiance down,
In compass far as mortal eye surveys,
The fair flowers languish, the green turf turns brown,
The leaves fall yellow from their sapless sprays ;
Earth gapes in chinks ; the' exhausted fountain plays
No more its music ; shrunk the streams and lakes,
He subjects all things to his ardent rays ;
The barren cloud, in air expanded, takes
Semblance of sheeted fire, and parts in scarlet flakes.

LVI.

Heaven seems a sable furnace : not a thing
Speaks freshness to the sight ; the frolicsome
Sweet Zephyr, silent, waving not a wing,
His grotto keeps ; mellifluous air is dumb.
Not a bird's fluttering, not an insect's hum
Breaks the still void ; or on its sultry gloom
If winds intrude, 't is only such as come
From the hot sands, Sirocco or Simoom,
Which, blown in stifling gusts, the springs of life consume.

LVII.

Nor brings the Night more comfort : on her shade
The glowing Sun his radiant impress leaves ;
With comets, lightnings, and the golden braid
Of other kindling fires her veil she weaves ;
Thee too, sad Earth, the niggard Moon bereaves
Of her delightful dew-drops ! not as erst
In amorous song her Druid minstrel grieves ;
And all the wild-wood bells and blossoms thirst
For the moist juice which late their fragrant spirits nursed.

LVIII.

Through these unquiet nights, sweet Sleep, exiled,
Fled from the languid lids of weeping men ;
Nor would by amorous courtship be beguiled,
Or flattering words, to spread his wings again :
But yet their worst of evils was the pain,
The rage of thirst ; Judea's impious king
With secret herbs, and drugs of deadlier grain
Than Styx or sable Acheron could wring
From their malignant waves, had poisoned every spring.

LIX.

And Siloa's brook, that, gliding clear and swift,
Gave affluent beverage to the Franks before,
Has now no freshening virtue in its gift,
Scarce with warm waves o'erspreads its sandy floor.
Not the broad Po in May, when amplest pour
His floods, nor Ganges, which the Indian deems
A God, nor seven-mouthed Nile, when floating o'er
Green Egypt's boundless plains with even streams,
To their inflamed desires at all superfluous seems.

LX.

If any e'er 'twixt shady woods had seen
Cool glassy lakes in liquid silver sleep,
Quick fountains, bubbling up from mosses green,
Slide down smooth hills, brooks querulously creep
O'er lustrous stones, or Alpine torrents leap
Roaring from heaven, he paints them o'er and o'er
To his enamoured wish, sweet, icy, deep,
And, tasting them in fancy, tortures more
A heart already fired, tormented to its core.

LXI.

Warriors robust, whose frames of sturdiest mould
Not the long march through asperous regions rude,
Nor iron mails that aye their limbs enfold,
Nor weapons thirsting for their death, subdued,—
Tamed by the sultry heat, with sweat embued,
Lie both a burden to themselves, and prey;
Faint, weak, dissolved in idlest lassitude,
A secret fire lives in their veins, whose ray
Eats by degrees their flesh, and melts their bones away.

LXII.

Sickens the late fierce steed; untasted, loathed,
Stands his once relished, once saluted corn;
The dancing mane and neck with thunder clothed,
But late superbly in the battle borne,
Droops to the ground; the pride of laurels worn
No more dilates his nostrils, swells his veins;
Glory his hatred, victory seems his scorn;
His rich caparisons, embroidered reins,
And sumptuous trophies, all — as baubles he disdains.

LXIII.

Sickens the faithful dog, and for his lord
And once beloved abode no longer cares;
Couchant he lies, by inward furies gnawed,
And, scorched, gapes momentarily for lighter airs;
But respiration, though it oft repairs
Nature's disorders, and corrects the fire
In feverish bosoms, charmed from healing, bears
Not now the cool refreshment they require;
So hot and stifling blow the breezes they inspire.

LXIV.

Thus languishes the earth; in this estate
The wretched troops lie sickening in their tents;
And, desperate grown of victory, meditate
What deadlier ills must crown these dire events:
On every side the spacious camp presents
Some dreadful scene; on every side the noise
Is heard of murmurs, weepings, and laments;
"What more hopes Godfrey?" cry they with one voice;
"Waits he till hasting death the total camp destroys?"

LXV.

"Ah! with what forces does he hope to be
Lord of these towers? whence now his rams and vines
Can he expect? does he alone not see
Heaven's wrath revealed against our rash designs?
By thousand prodigies and thousand signs
To us its adverse spirit stands displayed;
Whilst on our heads the sun so hotly shines,
That not the Indian, or the Ethiop laid
On burning sands, more needs refreshment, showers and
shade!"

LXVI.

"Thinks he it then a thing of no concern,
That we, a worthless and neglected train,
Vile, useless myrmidons, to death should burn,
That he his kingly sceptre may maintain?
And seems it then so great a bliss to reign,
That man should guard it at a price so high?
That he should seek his empire to retain
With soul so greedy, when, before his eye,
Of his own subjects thus such numbers faint or die?"

LXVII.

"Mark the said pious Prince, his insight deep,
Humane to aid, prophetic to purvey!
Our good he quite forgets, so he can keep
His hurtful honour and vain-glorious sway:
He sees both streams and fountains waste away
From us, yet for himself cool waters sweet
Brings from far Jordan; and at banquets gay,
With a few Magnates, shaded from the heat,
Mingles the fresh clear wave with costly wines from Crete!"

LXVIII.

Thus the Franks murmured ; but the Grecian guide,
Long weary of the war, aloud repined :
" And why should I or my brave troops," he cried,
" Stay to be stifled by this scorching wind ?
If Godfrey will be so insanely blind,
Let him and his obsequious people look
To the result ! are we to be combined
In their destruction ?"—no farewell he took ;
But in the silent night, silent the camp forsook.

LXIX.

This base desertion with the morning star
Was clearly seen, and wide the' infection spread ;
Those who the pastoral voice of Ademar
Lately obeyed, the troops Clotharius led,
And other chiefs now numbered with the dead,
Freed from their oaths of duty by the Power
That of all human ties dissolves the thread,
Already treat of flight ; and some, the flower
Thereof, at once depart, at midnight's shadowy hour.

LXX.

This Godfrey saw, and had been swift to take
Judgment's just dues, but such his soul abhorred ;
And, full of living faith, faith which can make
Hills move, and floods stand steadfast, he implored
In deep devotion earth's almighty Lord,
That he his ancient mercies would reveal,
And shed the fountains of his grace abroad ;
His hands he clasped, and, full of sacred zeal,
Thus, with eyes raised to Heaven, to Heaven he made appeal.

LXXI.

" Father and Lord ! if in a thirsty land
Thou on thy hosts e'er rained ambrosial dew,
E'er with thy power endued a mortal hand,
To smite the flinty rocks, till, cleft in two,
They gushed with living streams, O now renew
On these the like sure mercies ! and if we
Seem less deserving in thy holy view,
Thy grace that want supply ! that all may see
They are thy warriors still, and called, O Lord, by thee !"

LXXII.

These prayers sincere, derived from a desire
Upright and humble, were not slow, but light
And swift as winged turtles, to the Sire
Of men and seraphs took their instant flight :
The' Eternal heard, and from his holy height,
On his faint hosts, as o'er his suffering child
A sympathising parent, cast his sight,
In looks where pity beamed, where mercy smiled,
And thus in gracious words, benevolent and mild :

LXXIII.

" Till now these dear and faithful hosts of mine
Have suffered peril, pain, fatigue, and woe ;
'Gainst them, with arms and secret arts malign,
The world around and powers of hell below
Have both conspired to work their overthrow ;
Now a new series of events shall run ;
Smooth to the end shall their adventure flow :
Let rains descend, return Bertoldo's son,
And Egypt's hosts arrive, to grace his laurels won ! "

LXXIV.

He bowed his head : the heavens with all their hosts,
The fixed, the wandering stars in their bright stations,
Shook at the sign ; shook hills, and seas, and coasts,
And Orcus trembled to its deep foundations.
Instant from north to east swift coruscations
Flashed through the skies, and with a golden sound
Rolled the clear thunder ; with glad shouts the nations
Hail the bright shining, hailed the roll profound,
And wonder, hope, and joy in every heart abound.

LXXV.

Lo ! sudden clouds, not those exhaled from earth
By the sun's rays, but from the heavens—that rend,
And all their secret springs unlock, take birth,
Collect, combine, and fast to earth descend :
The glooms of night, ere noon is at an end,
Surprise the day ; and, spreading quickly o'er
The' encompassed world, all things in shadow blend ;
Then swell the winds, the rains impetuous pour,
And, o'er their banks escaped, the brooks and fountains roar.

LXXVI.

As in the burning heats of summer, when
At length the long-wished rains of heaven descend,
A flight of babbling wild-ducks in the fen,
With hoarse glad cries the coming shower attend;
Spread their dry wings to the cool moisture, bend
Their grey necks back to wet the thirsty bill,
And proyne their plumes, and as the waters blend
Into a pool, hoarse-chattering, clamouring still,
Rush, duck, and flounce, and dive, and quaff the waves at
will;—

LXXVII.

So they with glad huzzas the showers salute,
Which Heaven, in answer to their Chief's request,
Pours down in bounty; not a voice is mute;
This one his tresses, that one soaks his vest:
From glasses some, some from their helms with zest
Quench their deep thirst; in the fresh wave profuse
Some lave their faces, some their brows; the rest,
More prudent, vases, urns, and ewers produce,
And the mellifluous streams store up for future use.

LXXVIII.

Nor is the drooping spirit of mankind
Alone rejoiced and eased of all its pains;
But Earth, of late afflicted, scorched, and pined,
A like refreshment and repose obtains:
Her chinks by virtue of the falling rains
Are closed, renewed her vegetative powers;
And the rich moisture through her inmost veins
Received, she ministers in plenteous showers,
To her reviving shrubs, and freshly-smelling flowers.

LXXIX.

As a sick maid, when sprightly balms appease
The fever, late that scorched her life away,
Now disencumbered of the long disease
That made her beauty its repast and prey,
Strengthens, revives, and flourishes as gay
As when her cheek with brightest roses bloomed,—
So Earth, forgetful of her late decay,
The griefs and ills that had her strength consumed,
Joyful her flowery crowns and garlands green resumed.

LXXX.

The rains are o'er, the sun returning glows,
But with a sweet, benign, and temperate ray,
Yet full of virtual power, as at the close
Of showery April or the birth of May.
O Faith divine! the Good and Just who pray
In thy devoted strength, can dissipate
Infectious airs, malignant heats allay,
The series of the seasons change, abate
The rage of angry stars, and vanquish Time and Fate!

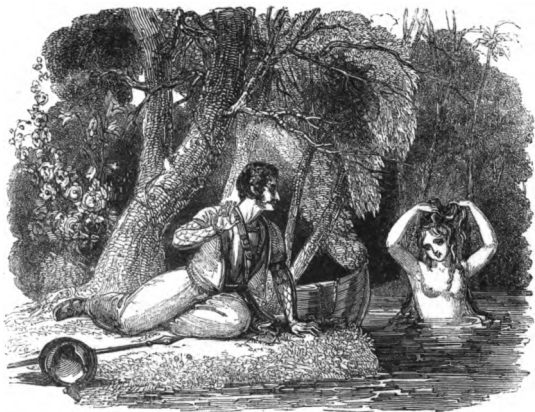
END OF CANTO XIII.



JERUSALEM DELIVERED.

CANTO XIV.





Stanza 1x.

ARGUMENT.

GODFREY, in vision rapt to Paradise,
Is warned of God to call back to the host
The good Rinaldo, wherefore he replies,
When his recall the Princes have proposed,
With favour; Peter, whom the Holy Ghost
Had previously instructed, now prepares
To send two knights where on the nigh sea-coast
A courteous wizard lives, who first declares
To them Armide's deceits, then how to scape her snares.

JERUSALEM DELIVERED.

CANTO XIV.

I.

Now from the fresh soft lap and twilight bower
Of her still mother flew the gentle Queen
Of Shade, with light airs compassed, and a shower
Of starlight dews, pure, precious, and serene ;
And, shaking o'er the universal scene
The humid border of her veil, impearled
With honey-balm the flowers and forests green ;
Whilst the sweet zephyrs their still wings unfurled,
And fanned to dulcet sleep and peace the' o'erwearyed world.

II.

Each busy thought of rude disturbing day
In sweet oblivious quietude was drowned ;
But He, whose wisdom heaven and earth doth sway,
Yet kept his ruling watch, insphered and crowned
With ceaseless light ; and from heaven's starry round
Casting on Godfrey the ecstatic beam
Of his mild eye, to him in sleep profound,
By silent precept of a missioned dream,
Of his Almighty Mind revealed the will supreme.

III.

In the rich Orient, near the valves of gold
Whence the Sun sallies, turns a crystalline
Clear gate, whose doors in harmony unfold,
Ere pale the planets and the day-beams shine :
'Tis thence the glorious dreams which the Divine
In grace to pure and holy spirits sends,
Issuing fly forth ; from that pictorial shrine
This dream to pious Godfrey now descends,
And o'er his placid face its radiant wings extends.

IV.

Nor dream nor gifted vision e'er portrayed
Such beautiful or lively forms, as here
To Godfrey's fancy this, which now displayed
Of heaven and of its stars the secrets clear;
As in the mirror of a glassy sphere,
All was at once presented to his sight
That in them is; he seemed, in swift career,
Caught up to an expanse of perfect white,
Adorned with thousand flames that gave a golden light.

V.

Here, as the moving spheres, the vast blue sky,
The lights, and the rich music he admires,
Lo, to his side a winged knight draws nigh,
With sunbeams crowned, and circumfused with fires!
And in a voice to which the clearest choirs
And perfect marriage of sweet sounds below,
Breathed out from beauteous lips or golden wires,
Would be but discord, said: "Canst thou bestow
No smile, or dost thou not thy once-loved Hugo know?"

VI.

To which the Duke replied; "That aspect new,
Which like the glowing sun so brightly shines,
Has dazzled so mine intellectual view,
That it can ill recall its ancient lines:"
And saying this, to greet him he inclines;
Thrice with a fond affectionate embrace
Around his neck his loving arms he twines;
And thrice the' encircled form and radiant face
Fly like a summer cloud, or shade the sunbeams chase.

VII.

Prince Hugo smiled; "And think not, as of old,"
He said, "that earthly robes my limbs invest;
My naked spirit here dost thou behold,
A simple shape; I dwell, a glorious guest,
In this the' illumined City of the Blest:
This is the temple of our God, the' abode
Of his true knights; and here thou too shall rest:"
"Ah, when?" he cried; "if aught in me this mode
Of bliss obstruct, loose now, O loose the' encumbering load!"

VIII.

"Soon!" replied Hugo; soon in glory thou
Shalt gathered be to our triumphant band;
But many a laurel first must grace thy brow,
Much blood be shed by thy victorious hand;
The Pagan armies yet thou must withstand,
And from their grasp by many a toilsome deed
Wresting the sceptre of the Holy Land,
Fix the Frank empire; then, it is decreed,
That to thy gentle rule thy brother shall succeed.

IX.

"But now look round more fixedly; behold—
To quicken for the skies thy pure desires,
These lucid halls and starry orbs of gold,
Which, whirling round, the' Eternal Mind inspires!
Observe the beauty of those siren choirs
Of seraphs; hear the' angelical sweet strains,
In concord sung to their celestial lyres;
Next view," he said, "and pointed to the plains
Of earth, below, what yon terrestrial globe contains.

X.

"Think of your earthly titles and designs;
With what a vile reward is virtue crowned!
Mark what a little ring your pride confines!
What naked deserts your vain glories bound!
Earth like an island the blue sea flows round.
Now, called the Mighty Deep from coast to coast,
Now, the vast Ocean; to that pompous sound
Nought corresponds, to authorise such a boast—
'T is but a shallow pool, a narrow marsh at most."

XI.

The Spirit said: and he his sight let fall
On earth, and smiled with a serene disdain;
Shrunk to a point, seas, streams, and mountains tall
He sees, remote, but here distinguished plain;
And much he wondered that weak man should strain
At shades and mists that swim before his eyes,
And chase those radiant bubbles of the brain—
Capricious Fame, and Power, that, followed, flies,
Nor heed the' inviting voice that calls him to the skies.

XII.

Wherefore he answered: "Since not yet thy God
Is pleased to call me from this cage of clay,
Which path of life is safest to be trod
Mid Earth's erroneous windings, deign to say."
Hugo replied; "The least fallacious way
To happiness, indeed the' alone sure track,
Is that thou walkest; turn not then astray;
Alone I would advise thee, be not slack
From his far exile now to call Rinaldo back.

XIII.

"For, as by Providence divine to thee
The golden sceptre, the supreme command
Of that adventure is consigned, so he
As sovereign agent of thy schemes, must stand
Assistant to the task: the first and grand
Office is thine; the second the Most High
Concedes to him; he is the army's hand,
And thou the head,—none other can supply
His place, not e'en thyself, thy state does this deny.

XIV.

"He, he alone has license to cut down
The forest guarded by such magic art;
From him thy troops, despairing of the town
From the deserters they have seen depart,
On flight themselves debating, shall take heart,
And, nerved with livelier strength by the mere sight
Of one so valiant, fresh for conquest start;
The bulwarks he shall shatter, scale their height,
And the vast Memphian hosts o'erpower in mortal fight."

XV.

He ceased, and Godfrey answered; "His return
Would be most grateful to my feelings; thou,
Who every secret purpose dost discern,
Know'st if I love him, as I here avow:
But say, what offers must I make him? how
Soothe his vexed spirit? where my heralds send?
Wilt thou that I for his recal allow
Courtship, or use command? declare, blest friend,
How I to make this suit may fitly condescend."

XVI.

"God"—in reply the' angelic spirit said,
"Who with such high regards thy rank has graced,
Wills, that to thee all reverence yet be paid
By those who under thy command are placed;
Shew thou not then facility nor haste;
Make no request; for, haply, this would lead
To scorn, and thus thy dignity, debased,
Might fall into contempt; but asked, concede
And yield, when first thy knights shall for forgiveness plead.

XVII.

"Guelph shall petition thee (by God inspired),
To' absolve the headstrong youth of that offence,
To which intemperate wrath his spirit fired,
That he to honour may return; dispense
Thy grace; and though in loosest indolence
And love intoxicate, he now reclines
On a far foreign shore, doubt not but thence
He will return, ere many a morning shines,
Apt for thy pressing needs and difficult designs.

XVIII.

"Your Hermit Peter, to whose piercing sight
Heaven of its secrets gives perception clear,
Shall thy sent messengers direct aright,
Where certain tidings they of him shall hear;
The sage to whose abode their ship must steer,
Will shew the arts and methods they must use
To free, and home conduct the wandering peer;
Thus Heaven at length shall, partial to thy views,
Beneath the sacred Cross each errant chief reduce.

XIX.

"Farewell! yet ere I end, hear one brief thing,
Which will, I know, delight thy noble mind;
Your blood shall mix, and from that union spring
A glorious issue, dear to all mankind!"¹⁰
He said; and like a cloud before the wind,
Or azure mist upon the mountain's crest
By the hot shining of the sun refined,
Vanished away; sleep fled, and left his breast
With wonder and deep joy confusedly possessed.

XX.

His eyes he opes, and sees the Orient blaze
With the high-risen Aurora ; from repose
He starts, in iron robes his limbs arrays,
And o'er his back the purple mantle throws ;
Then takes his seat ; for, soon as morning glows,
To his pavilion thron'g the knights of state,
In customary council to expose
Their sentiments, and of the war debate ;
Thither they all were met, and round in silence sate.

XXI.

Then Guelph arose, full of the new design
Which had his mind inspired, and drawing near,
To Godfrey thus made suit ; " O, Prince benign,
What I propose receive with favouring ear !
I come to ask, with all thy nobles here,
Grace for a crime, and, if it must be said,
A crime yet recent ; whence it may appear,
Perchance, that my request is hasty made,
In an untimely hour, ere yet maturely weighed.

XXII.

" But when I think that to a Prince so mild
My suit is proffered, and for whose brave sake,
That, too, the intercessor is not vilde
Nor mean of rank, I cannot choose but take
The prayer for granted, which will surely make
All happy, and obtain deserved applause ;
Recall Rinaldo ! I my honour stake
That he his blood will, in the common cause,
Shed to redeem his fault, and satisfy the laws.

XXIII.

" What daring hand but his those haunted bowers,
So feared, shall e'er successfully assail ?
Who, of a firmer heart, more vigorous powers,
May hope the risks of death to countervail ?
Thou shalt behold him o'er yon towers prevail,
Shatter the wall, beat down the brazen door,
And singly, before all, the rampart scale :
Restore him to the camp, kind Sire, restore !
Its hope, its heart, its hand ! by Jesu I implore !"

XXIV.

"To me a nephew, to thyself restore
An agent, prompt for each sublime attack ;
Leave him not sunk in slumber, I implore,—
To glory, to himself, invite him back ;
Let him but follow the triumphal track
Of thy blest flag, the world shall witness be
Of his improvement ; he shall not be slack
To do illustrious deeds, beholding thee,
Ranked beneath thy command, fulfilling thy decree !"

XXV.

Thus sued the high-born Guelpho, and the rest
With partial murmurs the request improved ;
Godfrey, as though revolving in his breast
A thing before unthought of, as behoved,
Paused, and made answer : " Can I but be moved
To grace and mercy, when you all are bent
To press me ? your petition stands approved ;
Let rigour yield,—what you with one consent
Desire, shall be my law : I yield, and am content.

XXVI.

"Let the brave youth return, but let him rein
Henceforth his rage more wisely ; and take heed,
That the high hopes our armies entertain
Of his maturing years, be matched indeed
By equal actions ;—now, my lord, proceed,—
"T is fit the wanderer be recalled by thee ;
Return he will, I trust, with willing speed ;
Choose then the messengers, and o'er the sea
Or sands direct them where you judge the knight to be."

XXVII.

He ceased, and thus the warrior Dane : " I pray
To be the man commissioned ; I shall slight
All danger, doubt, or distance of the way,
So I may give this sword to whom of right
It henceforth must belong : " the Danish knight
Was resolute of heart, and brave of hand ;
The offer thus gave Guelpho much delight :
"Thy wish," said he, "is mine ; and with thee, bland
Ubaldo, sage and sure, the mission will demand."

XXVIII.

Ubold in early lifetime had surveyed
Much of the world, in various realms had been ;
From frozen zones to where palmettos shade
The sultry Ethiop, had most nations seen ;
Their rites observed, and with perception keen
Learned, at whatever port his bark might touch,
To imitate the language, mode and mien
Of the rude native ; thus, his parts were such,
That, in his court retained, Lord Guelpho loved him much.

XXIX.

These were the knights appointed to recall
The noble fugitive ; and Guelph ordained,
That they should shape their journey to the hall
Where Bohemond in kingly splendour reigned ;
For that the warrior there was entertained,
By public fame had through the host been spread,
And as a certain fact was still maintained :
The Hermit, knowing they were much misled,
Amidst them entered now, and interposing said :—

XXX.

“ In following, Signior, the fallacious breath
Of public rumour, you pursue a guide
Headstrong and treacherous, which, if not to death,
From the right path will lead your steps aside :
No ! give your pinnacle o’er the sea to glide ;
To Ascalon’s near shores your sails commend ;
Where a swift stream rebuts the salt sea-tide,
A hermit you will meet, my trusty friend,
Of your intent forewarned,—to all his words attend.

XXXI.

“ Much from the foresight of his own clear mind,
Much of your voyage has he learned from me ;
Wise as he is, the Senior you will find
As much distinguished for his courtesy,
His affable discourse and manners free.”
Instructed thus, no more did Charles inquire,
Nor Ubold more ; but, as a fixt decree,
Obeyed those accents, which celestial fire
Was, as they surely knew, accustomed to inspire.

XXXII.

They bid adieu; impatience spurs them on,—
Without delay they launch, and drive before
The willing wind direct for Ascalon,
Where the blue ocean breaks against the shore:
Scarce had they caught the hoarse and hollow roar
Of breakers on the coast, than they beheld
The' anticipated stream its waters pour
Into the sea, by recent torrents swelled,
And o'er its rocky banks with headlong force impelled.

XXXIII.

High o'er its banks the unrestricted flood,
Swift as a flying shaft, its waters rolled;
Whilst in confusion and suspense they stood,
A Sire appeared, right venerably old,
Crowned with beech-leaves; long robes his limbs enfold
Of whitest grain,—he shook a charming rod—
The surge grew calm; and, curious to behold,
With unwet feet, in only sandals shod,
He on the waters walked, and toward the vessel trod.

XXXIV.

As o'er the Rhine when winter its broad tide
Has in smooth chains of solid silver bound,
The village girls in crowds securely glide,
With long swift strokes, in many a playful round;
So on these orient waves, though neither sound,
Nor crystallized to ice, this ancient man
Walked to the deck on which in awe profound
The knights stood fixt, stood stupified to scan
This singular, strange sight; he came, and thus began:

XXXV.

“O friends, a perilous and painful quest
You urge, and much in need of guidance stand!
The knight you seek, far in the golden West
Lies on a wild, unknown, and Gentile strand:
Much, O how much for you remains on hand
To dare and do! what coasts must you not clear,
What spacious seas, and what long tracts of land!
Beyond the limits of our eastern sphere,
You must your search extend, your winged pinnace steer!

XXXVI.

"Yet scorn not first to view the hidden cell
Which I my secret hermitage have made;
Momentous things you there shall hear me tell,
Most requisite for you to know;"—he said,
And made the waves yield passage; they obeyed,—
Murmuring sweet music, they receded swift;
And, here and there dividing, high o'erhead
Hung curling, like some proud and beetling elf,
That o'er the mining deep is seen its brows to lift.

XXXVII.

He took them by the hand, and led them down
The river's depth beneath the roaring main,
By such pale light, as through some forest brown
Streams from the yellow moon, when in her wane:
They see the spacious caverns that contain
The weight of waters which above-ground break
So freely forth; that in one lucid vein
Burst in clear springs, or, more expansive, make
The broad smooth-sliding stream, slight pool, or sheeted lake.

XXXVIII.

The cisterns there whence Ganges takes his course,
Po, and renowned Hydaspes, strike their eye;
Don, Eúphrates, and Tanais; nor its source
Mysterious does the Nile to them deny;
More deep, a river flowing brightly by
O'er beds of living sulphur they behold,
Brimmed with quicksilver; these the sun on high
Ripens, refines, and in their secret mould
Binds in resplendent veins of silver, zinc, or gold.

XXXIX.

And the rich flood did all its banks instar
With precious stones, enchanting to the sight;
Which, like bright lamps, illumined wide and far
The den's black gloom with luxury of light:
There, in blue lustre, shone the sapphire bright,
Heaven's native tint; the jacinth glistened mild;
Flamed the fine ruby, flashed the diamond white,
In virgin state, on sparkling opals piled,
And, gay with cheerful green, the lovely emerald smiled.

XL.

In dumb amazement the two warriors passed,
And all their thoughts to these strange scenes applied !
Said not a word ! Ubaldo spake at last,
And thus in faltering speech addressed his guide :
“ O Father, say where now we are ! this tide —
Where does it flow ? thine own estate explain ;
Do I behold aright ? or is this pride
And prodigality of wealth a vain
Illusion ? scarce I know, such wonder wraps my brain.”

XLI.

“ You,” he replied, “ are in the spacious womb
Of earth, the general mother ! not e'en ye
Could ever thus have pierced into the gloom
Of her rich bowels, unless brought by me :
I lead you to my home, which you will see
Illumed with curious light, a splendid place —
I was by birth a Pagan ; but, set free
From Pagan sin, regenerate grown by grace,
I was baptized, and now Christ's holy rule embrace,

XLII.

“ Think not my magic wonders wrought by aid
Of Stygian angels summoned up from hell ;
Scorned and accurst be those who have essayed
Her gloomy Dives and Afrits to compel, ”
By fumes or voices, talisman or spell ! —
But by perception of the secret powers
Of mineral springs, in nature's inmost cell,
Of herbs, in curtain of her greenwood bowers,
And of the moving stars, on mountain-tops and towers.

XLIII.

For in these caves mid glooms and shadows brown,
Far from the sun, not always I abide ;
But oft on sacred Carmel's flowery crown,
And oft on odorous Lebanon reside ;
There without veil I see the planets glide ;
Notice each aspect ; chronicle each phase
Of Mars and Venus ; every star beside,
That, swift or slow, of kind or froward rays,
Revolves and shines in heaven, is naked to my gaze.

XLIV.

"Beneath my feet I view, or rare or dense,
The clouds, now dark, now beautiful in show;
Of rains and dews the generation; whence,
Thwart or direct, the winds and tempests blow;
How lightnings kindle, why they dart below
In orb'd or writhen rays; so near I scan
The fireball, comet, and the showery bow
Wove in Heaven's loom, that I at length began,
Puffed up with pride, myself to fancy more than man.

XLV.

"So overweening of myself, that now
I thought my powers could compass or command
Knowledge of all above, around, below,
That sprang to birth from God's creative hand!
But when your Hermit, visiting this strand,
From sin my soul, from error purged my mind,
He taught my thoughts to soar, my views to' expand,
And I perceived how little and confined
They of themselves had been, how vain, how weak, how blind!

XLVI.

"I saw how, like night-owls at rise of sun,
Our minds with Truth's first rays are stupified;
Smiled at the futile webs my folly spun;
Scorned my vain-glory, and renounced my pride;
But still my genius, as he wished, applied
To the deep arts and philosophic quest
In which I joyed before, but, purified
And changed from what I was, with nobler zest;
Ruled by the Seer on whom implicitly I rest;—

XLVII.

"My guide and lord! what his sagacious wit
Points out, I execute; he not disdains
Now to my poor direction to commit
Works that might grace himself,—from servile chains
To free the' unconquered knight whom sloth detains
By strong enchantment in a witch's hold,
Where amorous Revel high misrule maintains;
Long for your coming have I looked, of old
By the prophetic Seer in signs to me foretold.

XLVIII.

Whilst with this tale the knights he entertained,
They reached his dwelling: large it was and fair;
Shaped like a grot, and in itself contained
Galleries, and rooms, and spacious halls; whate'er
Of wild or precious, beautiful or rare,
Earth breeds in her rich veins, shone forth to view;
Nor one romantic ornament was there,
That from arranging art its glory drew,
But, formed in Nature's freaks, in native wildness grew.

XLIX.

Nor failed there pages, numberless, untold,
To serve the guests with ready active haste;
Nor failed there urns of crystal, pearl, and gold,
On stands magnificent of silver placed,
Heaped high with whatsoe'er might please the taste:
And when with meats and wines their appetite
Was satisfied, rich fruits the table graced;
And the sage spoke; "T is time that I invite
To what will be, methinks, of more refined delight.

L.

"Armida's deeds, her purposes, her guile,
And secret snares in part to you are known;
How to your camp she came, and by what wile
She charmed and led your warriors to her lone
Enchanted fortress; how they then were thrown
By their false hostess into chains, and lay
Long time, their amorous follies to atone;
Till, sent with thousand guards to Gaza, they
Were by Rinaldo freed;—mark well what now I say.

LI.

"Things yet unknown to you do I declare,
Strange, but most true; when the fair witch perceived
That the rich prey it took such toil to snare,
Was rescued from her grasp, she stormed, she grieved;
Stamped, and in anger scarce to be conceived,
That her designs should be so clearly crost,
Burst forth; 'Let not the wretch be so deceived,
As to suppose the prisoners I have lost,
Are to be repossessed without revenge or cost!

LII.

“ If he has set them free, he in their place
Shall suffer lingering misery, hopeless thrall :
Nor shall this serve ; the dues of my disgrace
Shall on the whole curst Camp in vengeance fall ! ’
And, raving thus, she in her heart of gall
Framed what I now disclose to you, a sleight
The most malignant and refined of all ;
She came where young Rinaldo had in fight
Her warriors late subdued, or massacred outright.

LIII.

“ Rinaldo there had thrown his arms aside,
And in a Turkish suit himself disguised ;
Thinking perchance that he should safer ride,
In an array less known and signalized :
The’ Enchantress came ; his arms she recognised ;
A headless figure in them cased, and threw
Upon a brook’s green banks, where, she surmised,
It would be sure to meet the Christians’ view,
When to the shaded stream for waters fresh they drew.

LIV.

“ Nor was their coming hard to be foreseen ;
For she a thousand spies on all sides sent,
Who every day brought tidings to their queen
Of the far Camp, who came, returned, or went ;
Oft too her dexterous spirits would present,
After long talk with them in hall or grot,
Familiar picturings of each fresh event ;
And thus the corse she cast in such a spot,
As best subserved her aim, and deep insidious plot.

LV.

“ Near, the most shrewd of her deceitful train
She slyly placed, in shepherd’s weeds arrayed ;
And, what he was to do, to say, to feign,
Taught in all points, and was in all obeyed ;
He, seized whilst hurrying from the forest shade,
Spoke with your soldiers, and amongst them sowed
Seeds of suspicion ; which, maturing, swayed
The Camp to discord, till rebellion showed
Fearless her face abroad, and fires intestine glowed.

LVI.

"For, as she planned, all thought Rinaldo dead,
By Godfrey slain, his error to atone;
Albeit indeed their vague suspicions fled,
When the first beams of truth prevailing shone:
Thus with a craft peculiarly her own,
Armida wove her wiles; the second well
Chimed with the first, as will be seen anon;
The sequel of her scheme I now shall tell,
How she Rinaldo chased, and what from thence befell.

LVII.

"O'er hill and dale Armida watched the youth,
Till now his steps the swift Orontes stayed,
Where the clear stream its waters parting smooth,
Soon to rejoin, a flowery island made:
Here on the banks, under the greenwood shade,
A sculptured column might the Prince behold,
Near which a little shallop floating played;
The marble white, its workmanship, and mould,
As he admired, he read in words engraved of gold:—

LVIII.

"'O thou, whoe'er thou art, whom sweet self-will,
Or chance, or idlesse to this region guides!
No greater wonder in design or skill
Can the world shew, than that this islet hides;
Pass o'er and see!' Enticed, he soon divides
The boat's gilt chain, and, so divinely smile
Those summer waters, o'er them tilting rides;
But as the skiff was slight, he leaves the while
His knights ashore, and seeks alone the' inviting isle.

LIX.

"Landing, he looks around; yet nothing sees
To claim his curious sight but waters sheen,
Rocks, mossy grots, dells, fountains, flowers and trees,
So that he deems his fancy to have been
Mocked by the marble; yet the place, the scene,
Were such as might enchant the rudest minds;
So down he sits on banks of pleasant green,
Disarms his face, and sweet refreshment finds
In the cool fanning breath of odoriferous winds.

LX.

"Meanwhile the river gurgles with a sound
New to his ear, and thither calls his sight;
One placid billow in the midst whirled round,
And sudden sank, then rose to greater height;
From which peeped forth, with golden tresses bright,
A virgin's beauteous face—her neck—her breast—
Then her two lily paps of purest white,
Their budded nipples rosily expressed;—
Whilst whispering billows flung their silver round the rest.

LXI.

"So on the midnight stage some water-maid,
Or fairy queen slow rises from the floor;
And though no Siren, but a painted shade,
Yet all the fascinating grace she bore
Of those same treacherous Sisters, that of yore
Haunted the smooth sunshiny waters nigh—
The Tuscan coast; as bright a bloom she wore;
As musical her voice, her smile as shy;
And thus aloud she sang, enchanting air and sky.

LXII.

"O happy youths, whom Spring with roses sweet
Robes and adorns! let not false glory's ray,
Nor virtue's smooth insidious beauty cheat
Your tender minds, and lead your steps astray;
Who crops the lily ere it fades away,
Who follows pleasure, he alone is sage!
Press then the purple grape of life—be gay—
This Nature bids, and will you warfare wage
With her divine decrees, nor fear the frowns of age?

LXIII.

"Fools! to fling from you, without taste or care,
The brief enjoyments of your passing prime;
Names without object, idols all of air,
Are the vain toys to which you warriors climb:
The fame which charms with such a golden chime
Proud heroes' hearts, the glories that persuade,
Are but an echo in the ear of Time;—
A dream, a shade, the shadow of a shade;
With the bright rainbow born, they swift as rainbows fade.

LXIV.

" ' But let your tranquil souls with all sweet things
Your happy senses cheer, whilst fresh and fair;
Past woes forget; nor with the anxious wings
Of expectation speed the steps of care:
Heed not if thunders roll, or lightnings glare;
Let the storm threaten as it will, rejoice!
With languor rest, with rest enjoyment share;
This is Elysium, this true Wisdom's choice,
This Nature's self requires,—slight not her charming voice! "

LXV.

" So sings the Phantom, and her soft sweet tune
To settling sleep allures his heavy eyes;
Sense after sense dissolves in gentle swoon;
From limb to limb lethargic sweetness flies;
Till he of death the passive picture lies,
Nor e'en the bellowing thunder now could break
The magic trance; when this Armida spies,
She, issuing swift and silent as the snake,
From her close ambush runs, her sworn revenge to take.

LXVI.

" But on his face when she had gazed awhile,
And saw how placidly he breathed, how sweet
A light seemed e'en in his closed eyes to smile,
(Ah, were they open, what were her conceit!)
She paused in doubt, and near him took her seat;
The more she gazed, the more fond pity sprung
To her stern heart; till, of all angry heat
Charmed, o'er the boy, those greens and flowers among,
With loving, lovely eyes, Narcissus-like she hung.

LXVII.

" The living heat-dews that impearled his face,
She with her veil wiped tenderly away;
And, to cool more the fervours of the place,
Her turban took, and fanned him as he lay;
And called the mild winds of the west, to play
Round the rich cheeks that so divinely glow;
Mark but the change! Love's intellectual ray
Has from her savage bosom thawed the snow,
And to the kindest friend transformed the sternest foe.

LXVIII.

“ With bluebells, lilies, woodbines, and wild roses,
That flowered in thousands through those pleasant plains,
She next with admirable skill composes
Garlands, festoons, and odoriferous chains,
Which round his neck, and arms, and feet she strains
Tightly yet tenderly; and o'er his eyes
Whilst sleep her shadowy government maintains,
Bears upon tiptoe the imprisoned prize
To her enchanted car, and, mounting, cuts the skies.

LXIX.

“ Not now to rich Damascus does she fly,
Nor where her castle crests the' Asphaltine tide;
But, jealous of a pledge so dear, and shy
Of her new passion, betwixt shame and pride,
In the Atlantic sea resolves to hide,
Where rarely mortal oar was known to comb,
Or ne'er, green Neptune's curling waves; there, wide
Of all mankind, she singles for her home
A little Isle, round which the billows loneliest foam.

LXX.

“ One of a cluster to which Fortune lends
Her name, the' Elysian fields of old renown;
There she a mountain's lofty peak ascends,
Unpeopled, shady, shagged with forests brown;
Whose sides, by power of magic, half way down
She heaps with slippery ice, and frost, and snow,
But sunshiny and verdant leaves the crown
With orange woods and myrtles,—speaks—and lo!
Rich from the bordering lake a palace rises slow:

LXXI.

“ Here in perpetual May her virgin sweets
She yields him, lapt in amorous wild delight;
From that far palace, from those secret seats,
Your task must be to disenthral the knight;
To brave, encounter with, and put to flight
The guards her timorous jealousy has set,
To keep the marble hall and shaded height;
Nor shall you need or guide or gondolet,
Nor added arms divine, the' adventure to abet.

LXXII.

"A damsel, old in years though young in show,
When from the stream we issue, you will find,
With long rich tresses curling round her brow,
And garments beauteous as the bird of Ind;
She, through the ocean, swifter than the wind
Or wing of eagles, shall direct your track,
And leave the lightning in her flight behind;
Nor will you find her as a guide less slack,
Or less secure of trust, to speed you safely back.

LXXIII.

"At the hill's foot whereon the Sorceress reigns,
Bulls bellow, hydras roar, and serpents hiss,
Revengeful lions rear their frightful manes,
And bears and panthers ope the grim abyss
Of their devouring jaws; shake then but this
My fascinating wand, and at the sound
They will recede, or crouch your feet to kiss:
But on the summit of that guarded ground
More fearful perils lurk,—and subtler charms abound.

LXXIV.

"For there a fountain plays, whose dancing, pure,
And smiling rills the gazer's thirst excite,
Yet the cool crystals but to harm allure,—
Strange poison lurks within its waves of light;
One little draught the soul inebriates quite,
Mounts to the brain, and to the wit supplies
A host of gay ideas; till delight
Starts into voice, shrill peals of laughter rise,
Mirth overpowers the man, he laughs, and laughing dies."

LXXV.

"Turn then, O turn your lips away with dread;
Scorn the false wave that to such ills persuades;
Be not allured by wines or viands spread
By fountain sides, or under green arcades;
Let no fond gestures of lascivious maids—
The smile that flatters, or the tune that calls
To amorous blandishments in myrtle shades,
Move the fine pulse; each glance, each word that falls
Leave for the ivory gates, and tread the' interior halls.

LXXVI.

" Within, a maze of circling corridors
Verge and diverge a thousand winding ways ;
But of its various galleries, walks and doors,
A lucid plan this little chart displays,
To guide your steps : in centre of the maze,
A spacious garden flings its fragrance round,
Where not a light leaf shakes, or zephyr strays,
But breathes out love ; here, on the fresh green ground,
In his fair lady's lap the warrior will be found.

LXXVII.

" But when the' Enchantress quits her darling's side,
And elsewhere turns her footsteps from the place,
Then, with the diamond shield which I provide,
Step forth, and so present it for a space,
That he may start at his reflected face,
His wanton weeds and ornaments survey ;
The sight whereof, and sense of his disgrace,
Shall make him blush, and without vain delay
From his unworthy love indignant break away.

LXXVIII.

" Enough ! it were superfluous to say more,
Than that to morrow you may hence proceed ;
And when your pleasant voyage ends, explore
The secret paths that to the lovers lead,
With safe success and all convenient speed ;
For neither shall the powers of sorcery
Your voyage hinder or your plans impede ;
Nor (so superior will your guidance be),
Shall the fair witch have skill your coming to foresee.

LXXIX.

" Now, lest securely from her fairy halls
Shall you depart and wend your homeward way ;
But now the midnight hour to slumber calls,
And we must be abroad by break of day."
This said, he rose ; and, ushering them the way,
His wondering guests to their apartments brought ;
And leaving them to slumber's peaceful sway,
In reveries of glad and solemn thought,
His own nocturnal couch the good old Hermit sought.

END OF CANTO XIV.

JERUSALEM DELIVERED.

CANTO XV.





Stanza xlix.

ARGUMENT.

THE Seer's instructions the two knights pursue;
 They reach the ready ship that rides in port,
 Embark, set sail, and in the distance view
 The fleet and army of the' Egyptian court.
 Propitious winds within the canvas sport,
 Fast bounds the vessel to the pilot's hand
 O'er the blue ocean, making long seem short;
 On a lone isle remote at last they land,
 And every tempting sound and spectacle withstand.

JERUSALEM DELIVERED.

CANTO XV.

I.

SCARCE had Aurora ris'n with grateful ray,
Or Syrian shepherd led his flocks from fold,
Than the Sage, coming where the warriors lay,
Produced the chart, the shield, and wand of gold;
And "Rise!" he said, "ere yet the sun has told
His rosary on the hills,—soft breezes swell
To waft you on your voyage; here behold
The promised gifts that will have power to quell
Armida's witchcrafts all, and thaw each murmured spell."

II.

But they the' expected summons had forerun,
Were up, and robed in arms from head to feet,
And straight, by paths ne'er gazed on by the sun,
Following their host, returning they repeat
The steps they took to his romantic seat
The previous day; but to the river side
When they were come, the Senior stayed to greet
His parting guests; "Farewell, my friends!" he cried,
"Here must I leave you; go, good-fortune be your guide!"

III.

Embarked, the river with harmonious flow
The stranded vessel buoyantly upbore,
As, tossed into the stream, a leafy bough
Is wont to rise, and, without sail or oar,
Floated them gently to the verdant shore;
There as the spacious ocean they surveyed—
A little vessel with vermilion prone
Steered nigh, wherein was seen the destined maid,
And well the bounding bark her guiding hand obeyed.

IV.

Her locks hung curled around her brow ; her eyes
Were like the dove's, kind, tender, calm and true ;
Her face an angel's, bright, and Paradise
Was in each radiant smile and look she threw ;
Her robe from white to red, from red to blue,
Lilach, green, purple, fleetingly and fast,
Long as you looked, diversified its hue ;
You gaze again, the precious purple's past,
And a fresh tint appears, diviner than the last.

V.

The feathers thus, which on the neck genteel
Of the impassioned dove their circles spread,
Not for one moment the same tint reveal,
But in the sun ten thousand colours shed ;
Now they a necklace seem of rubies red,
Of emeralds now they imitate the light,
Then—let the gentle bird but turn its head—
They shift from green to black, from black to bright,
Then take the tints of all, still more to charm the sight.

VI.

"Enter," she said, "O happy youths! the bark,
Wherein from sea to sea I safely ply ;
In which the heaviest weights grow light, the dark
Rough billows smooth, and calm the stormiest sky ;
Me in his love and favour the Most High
Sends as your guide : " the Lady spake, and now
Guiding her painted gondola more nigh,
O'er the glad waves that round in homage bow,
The green saluted shore strikes lightly with her prow.

VII.

Her charge received, the cable she upcurls,
Frees the fixed keel, and launches from the land ;
Loose to the wind the silken sail unfurls,
And rules the rudder with a dexterous hand ;
Swell the full sails, as glorying to be fanned ;
Heaves the swollen stream, so deep with recent rain,
It might have borne a fleet well gunned and manned ;
But her light frigate it would well sustain,
Though to its usual state the waters were to wane.

VIII.

Shrill airs unusual sing within the sails,
And swiftly speed them from the verdant shore ;
The waters whiten to the active gales,
And round the vessel murmur, foam, and roar.
But now they reach to where its loud waves hoar
The river quiets in a broader bed ;
There, by the greedy sea embraced, its store
Melts into nought, or nought apparent, wed
With the vast world of waves before them greenly spread.

IX.

The sounding margin of the rough rude main
Is scarcely touched by the enchanted pine,
Than the black clouds that loured, presaging rain,
Clear off at once, and leave the morning fine ;
The mountain-waves, smoothed by a charm divine,
Fall flat, or if a zephyr intervene,
It does but curl the clear blue hyaline ;
And ne'er in heaven's benignant face was seen
A smile so sweet as now, a purple so serene.

X.

She sails past Ascalon, and cheerly drives
Her beauteous bark betwixt the south and west ;
And near to stately Gaza soon arrives,
Once but a haven held in slight request,
But year by year increasing as the rest
Went to decay, a city now it stands,
Of power, and strength, and merchandise possessed ;
And at this instant, countless as its sands,
Myriads of armed men o'erspread the bordering lands.

XI.

To land the warriors look, and see the plains
With countless rich pavilions whitened o'er,
And knights, and squires, and steeds with glistening reins
Pass to and fro betwixt the town and shore ;
Camels and burdened elephants, whose roar
Comes mellowed o'er the main, pace side by side,
And stamp the sands to dust ; with many an oar
Flash the vext waves, and in the harbour wide,
Gallies, and light caiques, and ships at anchor ride.

XII.

Some with strong rowers brushed the buxom wave;
Some spread their wings out to the winds, and flew;
Their sharp swift beaks the liquid seas engrave,
Foam the raised billows as the keels glide through.
"Though," said the Lady then, "the ocean blue
And yellow plains are filled, as you behold,
With hosts and navies of the trustless crew,
Fresh bands on bands, beneath his moon of gold,
By the strong tyrant yet remain to be enrolled.

XIII.

"Sole from his own or neighbouring realms are drawn
These troops; more distant aid he yet awaits;
For to the regions of the noon and morn
Extends his influence with barbaric states;
So that I hope we shall, with prosperous fates,
Have made return, ere from this subject-coast
He to Jerusalem his camp translates;
He, or whatever Captain in his post
May o'er his other chiefs be raised to rule the host."

XIV.

Then as an eagle passes one by one
All lesser birds, and soars to such a height,
That she appears confounded with the sun,
Her form unfixed by the acutest sight;—
So, betwixt ship and ship, her rapid flight
The gay and graceful Gondola holds on,
Without a fear or care, however slight,
Who may arrest or chase her, and anon
Is from the sailors flit, and out of prospect gone.

XV.

Past Raffia town she in a moment flew,
The first in Syria seen by those who steer
From fruitful Egypt, and had soon in view
The barren isle of lonely Rhinocere;
Not distant, trees o'er waving trees appear
To clothe a hill embrowning all the deep
That bathes its base;¹² not unremembered here,
Urned in its heart, the bones of Pompey sleep;
Round sigh the winds and woods; beneath, the waters weep.

XVI.

They next behold, by Damietta driven,
How to the sea proud Nile the tribute pays
Of his celestial treasures, by his seven
Famed mouths, and by a hundred minor ways:
Then past the City built in ancient days
By the brave youth of Macedon who bore
Palms from all lands, she sails, and soon surveys
The Pharian isle, an isle at least of yore,
But by an isthmus now connected with the shore.

XVII.

She leaves to starboard Rhodes and Crete unseen,
And to the' adjacent shore of Libya stands;
Along the sea productive, tilled, and green,
But inly thronged with snakes and barren sands:
Barca she passes, passes by the lands
Where stood Cyrene, who no more presides,
Queen of the silent waste! and soon commands
With Ptolomet the cypress wood, whence guides
Lethe the fabled flow of his oblivious tides.

XVIII.

Syrtes, the seaman's curse, before the wind
She flies aloof, and far to seaward steers;
And, doubling Cape Judeca, leaves behind
Swift Magra's stream, till Tripoli appears,
Crowning the coast; due north, low Malta rears
Her cliffs, but Malta they not now behold;
To shun the lesser Syrtes, which she fears,
She tacks; but, past Alzerbo, coasts more bold
The land where dwelt the mild Lotophagi of old.

XIX.

Next on the crooked shore they Tunis see,
Whose bay a hill on either side embrowns,—
Tunis, rich, stately, honourable, and free,
Beyond all other Mauritanian towns;
Right opposite to which Sicilia crowns
The sea, and, roughly rising o'er the flood,
In sombre shade Cape Lilybæum frowns;
Here now the Damsel points where Carthage stood,
Rival so long of Rome, and drunk with Roman blood.

XX.

Low lie her towers ; sole relics of her sway,
Her desert shores a few sad fragments keep ;
Shrines, temples, cities, kingdoms, states decay ;
O'er urns and arcs triumphal deserts sweep
Their sands, or lions roar, or ivies creep ;
Yet man, proud worm, resents that coming Night
Should shroud his eyes, in no perpetual sleep !
Biserta now they reach in silent flight,
Sardinia's distant isle receding on the right.

XXI.

Then scudding by the vast Numidian plains,
Where wandering shepherds wont their flocks to feed,
Bugia and Algiers, the accursed dens
Of corsairs, rise, approach, and retrocede ;
By Oran's towers they pass with equal speed,
And, coasting the steep cliffs of Tingitan,
Now named Morocco, famous for its breed
Of elephants and lions, they began
Granada's adverse shores through azure mists to scan.

XXII.

And now Al Tarik's Straits they intersect,
Alcides' work, as gray traditions feign ;
Haply an isthmus did the shores connect,
Till some concussion rent its rocks in twain ;
And, by irruption of the horned main,
Abyla here and Calpe there was placed ;
And Libya, sundered from romantic Spain,
No more as friends, but foes each other faced,—
Such power Time hath to change, and lay strong bulwarks
waste.

XXIII. -

Four times the morn has tinted Ocean's cheek,
Since the gay bark its voyage first begun ;
Nor has it entered once or port or creek,
For rest or stores,—well furnished, need was none ;
It now the entrance of the strait has won,
Shoots the slight pass, and, far as sight can flee,
Into the pathless infinite is run :
If, land-locked, here so spacious seems the sea,
There, where it rolls round earth, what must the' appearance
be !

XXIV.

No longer now each city that succeeds
Rich Cadiz, o'er the billows they descry;
Fast wealthy Cadiz, fast all land recedes,
Sky girds the Ocean, Ocean bounds the sky:
Said Ubald then; "Fair pilot! make reply,
If on the boundless sea through which we glide
So swift, bark e'er before was known to ply,—
And if beyond this world of waves reside
Men of like modes with ours?" the Gondolier replied:

XXV.

"When Hercules the monsters had subdued
That haunted Libya and the realms of Spain,
Through all your coasts his conquests he pursued,
Yet durst not tempt the' unfathomable main;
Here then he raised his Pillars, to restrain
In too close bounds the daring of mankind;
But these his marks Ulysses did disdain,
And, fond of knowledge still, his curious mind
E'en by Alcides' laws refused to be confined.

XXVI.

"The straits he passed, and on the' Atlantic sailed,
Bold as the Sea-God in his fish-drawn shell;
But nought, alas, his naval skill availed,
The roaring billows rang his funeral knell!
The secrets of his fate no records tell,
Where bleached his bones, or whither drove his sail:
If any since were driven out by the swell
Of wave or wind, they perished in the gale,
Or came not back, at least, to tell the' adventurous tale.

XXVII.

"Thus still this sea rests unexplored; it boasts
A thousand isles, a thousand states unknown;
Not void of men, nor barren are the coasts,
But fertile, rich, and peopled as your own;
Nor can the sun which cheers your milder zone,
Be in its quickening virtue lifeless there,
But earth is heaped with fruits and blossoms blown:"
Said Ubald then; "Of this new world so fair,
Be pleased the worship, laws, and customs to declare."

XXVIII.

"As various as the tribes," she made reply,
"Their rites, and languages, and customs are;
Some Earth, the general mother, glorify,
Some worship beasts, the sun, and morning star;
Whilst some in woods and wildernesses far
Spare not to deify the Prince of Hell,
And heap their boards with captives slain in war;
In short, most impious are their rites, and fell
The faith of all the tribes that west of Calpe dwell."

XXIX.

"Will then," the knight rejoined, "that God who came
From heaven to' illuminate the human heart,
Shut every ray of Truth's celestial flame
From that, which forms of earth so large a part?"
"No," she replied, "each humanizing art
Shall yet be theirs; e'en kings shall coincide
The holy Faith and Gospels to impart;
Nor think indeed that this extent of tide
Shall from your world these tribes for ever thus divide."

XXX.

"The time shall come, when ship-boys e'en shall scorn
To have Alcides' fable on their lips,
Seas yet unnamed, and realms unknown adorn
Your charts, and with their fame your pride eclipse;
Then the bold Argo of all future ships
Shall circumnavigate and circle sheer
Whate'er blue Tethys in her girdle clips,
Victorious rival of the Sun's career,—
And measure e'en of Earth the whole stupendous sphere."

XXXI.

"A Genoese knight shall first the' idea seize,
And, full of faith, the trackless deep explore;
No raving winds, inhospitable seas,
Thwart planets, dubious calms, or billows' roar,
Nor whatsoe'er of risk or toil may more
Terrific shew, or furiously assail,
Shall make that mighty mind of his give o'er
The wonderful adventure, or avail
In close Abyla's bounds his spirit to impale."

XXXII.

"'Tis thou, Columbus, in new zones and skies,
That to the wind thy happy sails must raise,
Till Fame shall scarce pursue thee with her eyes,
Though she a thousand eyes and wings displays.
Let her of Bacchus and Alcides praise
The savage feats, and do thy glory wrong,
With a few whispers tossed to after days;
These shall suffice to make thy memory long
In history's page endure, or some divinest song." 13

XXXIII.

She said, and sliced through foam towards the west
Her course awhile, then to the south inclined,
And saw—now Titan rolling down to rest,
And now the youthful Morning rise behind;
And when with rosy light and dews refined
Aurora cheers the world, more sail she crowds;
Till, in blue distance breaking, as the wind
Curls off the mist that all the horizon shrouds,
They see a mountain rise, whose summits reach the clouds.

XXXIV.

As they advance the vapours melt, nor more
Their wished inspection of the isle prevent;
Like the vast pyramids 't was seen to soar,
Sharp in its peak, and widening in extent
Down to its base; it seemed to represent
The burning hill 'neath which the Giant lies
That warred on Jove, for with like sulphurous scent
It smokes by day, and still, as daylight dies,
With ruddy fires lights up the circumambient skies.

XXXV.

Then other islands, other mountains mild,
Less steep and lofty, their regards engage;
The Happy Isles, the Fortunate! so styled
By the fond lyrists of the antique age;
Which warrior, sophist, priest, and gifted sage
Believed so favoured by the heavens benign,
As to produce, untill'd, in every stage
Of growth, its fruits; unpruned the fancied vine
At once flowered, fruited, and gushed with generous
wine.

XXXVI.

Here the fat olive ever buds and blooms,
And golden honeys from old oaks distil,
And rivers slide from mountain-greens and glooms,
In silver streams, with murmurs sweet or shrill;
And here cool winds and dews all summer chill
The heats, and the calm halcyon builds her nest,
With every beauteous bird of tuneful bill;
And here are placed the' Elysian Fields, where rest,
In fair unfading youth, the spirits of the blest.

XXXVII.

To these the Lady made: "And now," said she,
"The destined haven of your hopes is near;
The promised isles of Fortune now you see,
Whose fame has reached, if not fatigued your ear
With its uncertain echoes; Fiction here
Has not been idle; rich they are, and gay,
And pleasant, but not quite what they appear
In poesy:" she said, and in her way,
Passed the first isle of ten that clear in prospect lay.

XXXVIII.

Then Charles: "If, Lady, with our enterprise
The' excursion suits, now let us leap ashore,
And mark what yet no European eyes
Have viewed—the people see, the place explore,
The rites they use, the Genius they adore,
And whatsoe'er may prompt the' inquiry keen
Of envying sages; that, recounting o'er
The perils braved, the strange new objects seen,
I may with honest pride exclaim, 'Yes! there I've been!'"

XXXIX.

"Worthy," the Gondolier replied, "of thee,
The' entreaty surely is; but what can I,
If Heaven's severe, inviolable decree
The least compliance with thy wish deny.
The perfect period fixed by God on high
To give this great discovery to the day,
Is not yet come; and thus for you to eye
The Secrets of the Deep, and back convey
The' authentic news, would be his will to disobey.

XL.

"To you 'tis granted, by peculiar grace
And superhuman skill, the fame to acquire
Of rescuing to your world from thralldom base,
A youth whom nations ardently desire;
Let this suffice, for farther to aspire,
Would be to war with fate:" whilst she replies,
The first green isle seems lessening to retire
From notice, and the next sublime to rise,
So blithely o'er the wave the charmed pinnacle flies.

XLI.

They now behold, how in the same degree
All in long order shun the realms of morn,
And by what equal distances of sea
The happy isles are each from each withdrawn:
Huts, curling smoke, white flocks, and ripening corn
Spoke seven of them inhabited; the rest
Were waste, o'errun with heath and shagged with thorn;
Where, fixed in long hereditary rest,
Secure the lion prowls, the vulture builds her nest.

XLII.

In one they find a lone sequestered place,
Where, to a crescent curved, the shore extends
Two moony horns, that in their sweep embrace
A spacious bay,—a rock the port defends;
Inward it fronts, and broad to ocean bends
Its back, whereon each dashing billow dies,
When the wind rises and the storm descends;
Whilst here and there two lofty crags arise,
Whose towers, far out at sea, salute the sailor's eyes.

XLIII.

Safe sleep the silent seas beneath; above,
Black arching woods o'ershad the circled scene;
Within, a grotto opens in the grove,
Pleasant with flowers, with moss, with ivies green,
And waters warbling in the depth unseen;
Needed nor twisted rope nor anchor there
For weary ships: into that so serene
And sheltered hermitage, the maiden fair
Entered, her slender sails unfurling from the air.

XLIV.

"Behold," she said, "the cupolas and towers
That on yon mountain's lofty summit shine!
There Christ's lethargic champion wastes his hours
In dalliance, idlesse, folly, feast and wine:
That slippery, steep ascent of palm and pine
Mount with the rising sun; nor let delay
Seem to you grievous; influences malign
The' important scheme to ruin will betray,
If any hour but that be fixed for the essay.

XLV.

"You yet with easy speed may reach the foot
Of the seen mountain, ere the day's expired;"
Their lovely guide in parting they salute,
And lightly pace at length the shore desired.
They found the way so much to be admired,
So full of goodly prospects, cool with shade,
And smooth withal to tread, that nothing tired;
And when they issued from the last green glade,
High o'er the landscape yet the evening sunbeams played.

XLVI.

They see that to the mountain's stately head
O'er nodding crags and ruins they must climb;
Below, with snows and frosts each path was spread,
For bloomy heath exchanged and odorous thyme;
Cedar, and pine, and cypress more sublime
Round its white shoulders tossed their verdant locks;
Sweet lilies peeped from forth the hoary rime,
Whilst (force of magic!) pinks, geraniums, stocks,
And roses, fully flowered, hung clustering round the rocks.

XLVII.

Within a savage cave beneath the mount,
Closed in with shades, the warriors passed the night;
But when the Sun from heaven's eternal fount
Through the brown forest shed his golden light,
"Up, up!" at once they cried; and either knight
With rival zeal along the track of frost
Began the' ascent; when, on their startled sight,
Whence they knew not, in various colours glossed,
Their onward path a fierce and frightful-serpent crossed.

XLVIII.

Her head and scaly crest of pallid gold
She raised erect, and swelled her neck with ire ;
Lightened her eyes ; and, hiding as she rolled
A length of way, she poison breathed and fire ;
Now she recoiled into herself, now nigher
Her tangled rings distending many a yard,
She slid along with mischievous desire,
Presenting all her stings the pass to guard,—
Much she the knights amazed, but did not much retard.

XLIX.

Already Charles, the monster to assail,
Had drawn his sword, when out Ubaldo spake :
“Soft! what is it you do? by arms so frail
How can you hope to quell the’ enchanted snake?”
His golden wand of an immortal make
He shook, so that the demon, smit with fear,
No longer hissing, sought the tangled brake ;
Needed no second sound to warn its ear ;
Instant it alipt away, and left the passage clear.

L.

A little further on, with sour disdain
A roaring lion the strict pass denied ;
Tossing aloft the terrors of his mane,
And his voracious jaws expanding wide,
He with redoubling fury lashed his side,
And to the knights advanced with hasty tread ;
But when the wand immortal he espied,
A secret instinct chilled his heart with dread,
And quelled his native fire ; he howled, and howling fled.

LI.

Their track the venturous couple follow fast,
But numerous legions yet before them rise
Of savage beasts, terrific as the past,
Differing in voice, in movement, and in guise ;
All monstrous forms, all wild enormities,
All the grim creatures in their sternest moods
That betwixt Nile and Atlas, Titan eyes,
Seemed gathered there, with all the raging broods
That haunt the’ Ercynian caves or old Hyrcanian woods.

LII.

But e'en this phalanx, massy, fierce, and bold
As it appeared, could not the pair affright,
Much less repel; for of the wand of gold
A single motion put them all to flight.
And now they climb victorious to the height
Of the rude precipice, without delay;
Save that the Alpine cliffs and glaciers, white
With drifted snows that round austere lay,
Of their sublime ascent more tedious make the way.

LIII.

But when at length the steep acclivity
Is scaled, and passed the snows and breezes keen,
Beneath the sunshine of a summer sky
They find an even, smooth, and spacious green.
Here in a clime delightfully serene
His wings the everlasting Zephyr shakes,
And breathes a ceaseless sweetness o'er the scene;
For here the sun one golden measure makes,
Nor ever charms asleep, nor e'er the wind awakes.

LIV.

Not as elsewhere with fervours frosts severe,
Or clouds with calms divide the happy hours;
But heaven, than whitest crystal e'en more clear,
A flood of sunshine in all seasons showers;
Nursing to fields their herbs, to herbs their flowers,
To flowers their smell, to leaves the' immortal trees;
Here by its lake, the splendid palace towers
On marble columns rich with golden frieze,
For leagues and leagues around o'ergazing hills and seas.

LV.

The warriors weary found themselves and faint,
From their long travel up the steep rough hill;
And loitering through the pleasant gardens went,
Walking or resting at their own sweet will;
When lo, a fountain whose light music shrill
Allures the thirsty pilgrim, gleamed in view!
In one tall column it descended chill,
And in a thousand crystal fragments flew,
Sprinkling with orient pearl the plants that round it blew.

LVI.

But through the grass these delicate cascades
The same deep channel in conclusion found,
And under curtain of perpetual shades
Ran warbling by, cool, tranquil, and embrowned;
Yet still so clear, that in its depth profound
Each glistening wave amid the sands was seen,
With all its curls of beauty; whilst around,
The mossy banks formed couches soft and green,
Inlaid with odorous herbs, and violets strewn between.

LVII.

"See here the fount of laughter! see the stream
To which such fatal qualities belong!
Now," they exclaimed, "let us avoid the dream
Of warm desire, and in resolve be strong;
Now shut our ears to the fair Siren's song,
And to each smile of feminine deceit
Close the fond eye!" thus warned, they pass along,
Until they reach to where the waters sweet
Break out a broader bed, and form a spacious sheet.

LVIII.

Here, served on ivory, stood all sumptuous food
That Taste could wish, or Luxury purvey,
And, chattering, laughing, in the crystal flood
Two naked virgins, full of wanton play;
Now kissing, wrestling, breaking now away,
Now striving which the other should outswim;
Now diving, floating, as the waters sway,
Sometimes above, sometimes below the brim,
Marking their course concealed by some voluptuous limb.

LIX.

These swimming damsels, beautiful and bare,
The warriors' bosoms somewhat did subdue;
So that they stayed to watch them, whilst the pair
Seemed all intent their pastimes to pursue:
One meanwhile, starting upward, full to view
Of the clear heavens her swelling breasts displayed,
And all that might with rapture more endure
The eye, to the white waist; the waves that played
Round her, each limb beneath pellucidly arrayed.

LX.

As from the waves the glittering Star of morn
Comes, dropping nectar ; or as rising slow
From Ocean's fruitful foam when newly born,
The Queen of Love and Beauty seemed in show,
So she appeared, so charmed ; her tresses so
From all their golden rings bright humour rained,
Rich with the colours of the showery bow ;
Whilst looking round, the knights but then she feigned
To see, and back recoiled, offended, shocked, and pained.

LXI.

Her tresses knotted in a single braid,
She in an instant loosened and shook down ;
Which, thickly flowing to her feet, arrayed
Her polished limbs as with a golden gown :
But O ! when fell the curtain from her crown,
What an enchanting spectacle was fled !
Yet 't was enchantment, so to find it flown :
Thus gloriously with locks and waves o'erspread,
She from them turned askance, rejoicing, rosy red.

LXII.

She smiled, she crimsoned deep, and all the while
Her smile the sweeter shewed the more she blushed,
And the sweet crimson sweeter for the smile
That o'er her tender face in sunshine rushed ;
Then with a voice so mild it might have hushed
The nightingale, and taken an angel prey,
Rich from her warbling lips these accents gushed :
" O happy pilgrims ! favoured to survey
Regions so full of peace, a Paradise so gay !

LXIII.

" This is the haven of the world ; here Rest
Dwells with Composure, and that perfect bliss,
Which in the Golden Age fond men possessed,
In liberty and love unknown to this ;
You now may lay aside the' incumbrances
Of arms, and safely hang them on the trees,
Sacred to Peace ; all else but folly is ;
Seek then soft quiet, seek indulgent ease,
Love's the sole captain here, young Love's the lord to please.

LXIV.

"The fields of battle here are roses green
And beds of roses, where—you dream the rest;
We will conduct you to our fairy queen,
The queen whose bounty makes her servants blest.
You of that happy band shall be impressed,
Whom she has destined for her joys; but first,
Your weary limbs of those rude arms divest,
In these cool waters be your dust dispersed,
And at yon board indulge your hunger, taste, and thirst."

LXV.

Thus sang the one; her sister played the mime,
In act and glance outpleading her appeal,
As swift or slow to the melodious chime
Of lutes and viols the blithe dancers wheel.
But to these wiles the knights in triple steel
Of stern resolve had shut their souls; and hence,
The tunes they sing, the beauties they reveal,
Their angel looks and heavenly eloquence,
But circle round and round, nor reach the seat of sense.

LXVI.

Or if of such sweet airs and glowing charms
Aught stirs the soil where buds unchaste Desire,
The heart soon Reason fills with her alarms,
And with strong hand roots up each rising brier:
Vanquished the nymphs remain; the knights retire,
And, without bidding them adieu, pass on;
These reach the palace, those with fruitless ire
Crimsoning afresh at the repulse, anon
Dive in the waves, and deep beyond all sight are gone.

END OF CANTO XV.



JERUSALEM DELIVERED.

CANTO XVI.





Stanza xvii.

ARGUMENT.

THE spacious palace of the' enchanting Dame
The warriors tread, where lost Rinaldo lies;
And speed so well, that, full of wrath and shame,
He bursts his bonds, and with them quickly flies:
She, to retain her loved deserter, tries
All powers of language and of tears—in vain,—
He parts; to' avenge her wrongs, on Dis she cries,
Destroys her palace, and, in high disdain,
Flies through the stormy skies in her aerial wain.

JERUSALEM DELIVERED.

CANTO XVI.

I.

ROUND is the spacious pile ; and in its heart,
Set like a gem, a garden is insphered,
More decked by nature and enriched by art,
Than the most beautiful that e'er appeared
To flower in old romance ; and round it, reared
The Stygian sprites unnumbered galleries,
Harmonious, seen at distance, but, when neared,
A trackless maze discordant to the eyes,—
Through all these tortuous coils their secret passage lies.

II.

Through the chief gate they tread the marble floors,
For full a hundred grace the spacious hold ;
Of fine and figured silver, here the doors
On their smooth hinges sing, of shining gold :
Awhile they pause the figures to behold
Cast on the squares ; for, with extreme surprise,
They see the metal rivalled by the mould ;
Speech fails alone, but, to the trusting eyes,
The sprightly shapes e'en speak, and limbed with life arise.

III.

Here midst Mæonian girls the Grecian Mars
Sits, telling fond romantic tales ; and he
Who stormed black Orcus, and upheld the stars,
Now twirls the spindle with a maiden's glee ;
Young Love looks on and laughs ; whilst Iole
In her unwarlike hands is seen to bear
His murderous arms with proud mock-majesty,
And on her back the lion's hide to wear,
Too rough a vest for limbs so finely turned and fair !

IV.

Near heaved a sea whose azure surface changed,
As close you looked, and into silver splashed;
Two adverse navies in the midst were ranged
For war—blue lightnings from the armour flashed;
In gold the bright and burning billows dashed,
And all Leucate did on fire appear,
Ere the beaks grappled, and the falchions clashed;
Augustus there all Rome, Antonius here
Brought up his Eastern kings, and couched his Memphian
spear.

V.

You would declare the rifted Cyclades
Concurred, and mountains did with mountains jar,
When with their tower-like vessels, those and these
Rushed o'er the brine, and shocked in mortal war:
Here, like the sparkles of a glancing star,
Darts fly, and fire-balls blaze; there, bloody dyes
The virgin whiteness of the waters mar:
Whilst neither wins, lo where, with heavy eyes,
O'er the vexed waves, alarmed, 'the' Egyptian beauty flies!

VI.

And flies her Chief? can he relinquish here
The glorious world to which his hopes aspire?
He flies not, no, nor fears; he does not fear,
But follows her, drawn on by fond desire:
You see him, (like a man whom now the fire
Of love torments, and now, as shame prevails,
Disdain,) alternately regard, as ire
And tenderness were cast in equal scales,
Now the still dubious fight, and now her lessening sails.

VII.

Then in the secret creeks of fruitful Nile
He in her lap appears for death to wait,
And with the pleasure of her lovely smile
Sweetens the bitter stroke of hasting fate.—
With such like arguments of various date
And issue in Love's story, were embossed
The glittering metals of that princely gate;
The figured tales long time the knights engrossed;
At length the charm they broke, and o'er the threshold crossed.

VIII.

As 'twixt its crooked banks Meander plays,
Curls and uncurls in its uncertain course,
Now to its spring, now to the Ocean strays,
Now meets itself returning to its source :
Such, only intertangled with a force
Yet more mysterious, of this mazy spot
The paths appear ; but now they have recourse
To the clear chart, which, pointing out both what
To shun, and what pursue, resolves the' enchanted knot.

IX.

These windings passed, the garden-gates unfold,
And the fair Eden meets their glad survey,—
Still waters, moving crystals, sands of gold,
Herbs, thousand flowers, rare shrubs, and mosses grey ;
Sunshiny hillocks, shady vales ; woods gay,
And grottos gloomy, in one view combined,
Presented were ; and what increased their play
Of pleasure at the prospect, was, to find
No where the happy Art that had the whole designed.

X.

So natural seemed each ornament and site,
So well was neatness mingled with neglect,
As though boon Nature for her own delight
Her mocker mocked, till fancy's self was checked ;
The air, if nothing else there, is the' effect
Of magic, to the sound of whose soft flute
The blooms are born with which the trees are decked ;
By flowers eternal lives the' eternal fruit,
This running richly ripe, whilst those but greenly shoot.

XI.

Midst the same leaves and on the self-same twig
The rosy apple with the' unripe is seen ;
Hung on one bough the old and youthful fig,
The golden orange glows beside the green ;
And aye, where sunniest stations intervene,
Creeps the curled vine luxuriant high o'erhead ;
Here the sour grape just springs the flowers between,
Here yellowing, purpling, blushing ruby red,
Here black the clusters burst, and heavenly nectar shed.

XII.

The joyful birds sing sweet in the green bowers;
Murmur the winds; and, in their fall and rise,
Strike from the fruits, leaves, fountains, brooks and flowers,
A thousand strange celestial harmonies;
When cease the birds, the zephyr loud replies;
When sing the birds, it faints amidst the trees
To whispers soft as lovers' farewell sighs;
Thus, whether loud or low, the bird the breeze,
The breeze obeys the bird, and each with each agrees.

XIII.

One bird there flew, renowned above the rest,
With party-coloured plumes and purple bill,
That in a language like our own expressed
Her joys, but with such sweetness, sense and skill,
As did the hearer with amazement fill;
So far her fellows she outsang, that they
Worshipped the wonder; every one grew still
At her rich voice, and listened to the lay:
Dumb were the woods,—the winds and whispers died away.

XIV.

"Ah see," thus she sang, "the rose spread to the morning
Her red virgin leaves, the coy pride of all plants!
Yet half open, half shut midst the moss she was born in,
The less shews her beauty, the more she enchants;
Lo, soon after, her sweet naked bosom more cheaply
She shews! lo, soon after she sickens and fades,
Nor seems the same flower late desired so deeply
By thousands of lovers, and thousands of maids!

XV.

"So fleets with the day's passing footsteps of fleetness
The flower and the verdure of life's smiling scene:
Nor, though April returns with its sunshine and sweetness,
Again will it ever look blooming or green;
Then gather the rose in its fresh morning beauty,
The rose of a day too soon dimmed from above;
Whilst, beloved, we may love, let—to love, be our duty,
Now, now, whilst 't is youth, pluck the roses of love!"¹

XVI.

She ceased ; and, as approving all they heard,
That tender tune the choirs of birds renew ;
The turtles billed, and every brute and bird
In happy pairs to unseen glooms withdrew.
It seemed that the hard oak, the grieving yew,
The chaste sad laurel, and the whole green grove,—
It seemed each fruit that blushed, each bud that blew,
The earth, air, sea, and rosy heavens above,
All felt divine desire, and sighed out sweetest love.

XVII.

Midst melody so tender, midst delights
So passing sweet, and midst such tempting snares,
Cautious, serene, and serious go the knights,
And steel their souls to the loose Lydian airs.
Lo, betwixt leaves and leaves, at unawares
Advancing slow, they see, or seem to see,—
They see most surely, crown of all their cares !
The lover and his darling lady ; he
In the fair lady's lap, on herbs and violets she.

XVIII.

Her veil, flung open, shews her breast ; in curls
Her wild hair wooes the summer wind ; she dies
Of the sweet passion, and the heat that pearls,
Yet more her ardent aspect beautifies :
A fiery smile within her humid eyes,
Trembling and tender, sparkles like a streak
Of sunshine in blue fountains ; as she sighs,
She o'er him hangs ; he on her white breast sleek
Pillowing his head reclines, cheek blushing turned to cheek.

XIX.

His hungry eye-balls, fixt upon her face,
For her dear beauty pine themselves away ;
She bows her head, and in a fond embrace,
Sweet kisses snatches, betwixt war and play,
Now of his just touched eyes, in wilder prey
Now of his coral lips ; therewith he heaves
Sighs deep as though his spirit winged its way
To transmigrate in her : amidst the lea ves,
This amorous dalliance all each watchful knight perceives.

XX.

A polished glass, whose sheen the stars excelled,
Strange arms! hung pendant at Rinaldo's thigh;
He rose, and to the fair the crystal held,
Her chosen page in each love-mystery:
Both—she with smiling, he with glowing eye,
Mark but one scene of all the scenes they view;
Her angel form and aspect they descry,
She in the glass, he, fond enthusiast! through
A sweeter medium far,—her eyes of heavenly blue.

XXI.

She in herself, he glories but in her;
He proud of bondage, of her empire she;
“And why,” he murmurs, “so to this recur?
Turn my beloved, turn thine eyes on me,—
Those smiling eyes, that no less blessed be,
Than blessed make; ah, know'st thou not, that best
They in mine eye-balls must thy beauty see?
And know'st thou not thy graces are expressed
Loss clear in this gay glass than in my faithful breast!

XXII.

“Though me thou scorn, thou might'st at least consent
To mark thine own most interesting face;
Those looks, else unrepaid, must rest content
With joy, if on themselves themselves they place;
So rare an image can no crystal trace,
No glass a perfect Eden can comprise
In its small round; to see aright thy grace
Thou must consult the mirror of the skies;
Heaven is thy glass, the stars reflect thy sparkling eyes.”

XXIII.

“Armida smiled at this, yet not the less
Kept to her toilet, gathering up behind
Her hair, restricting each resplendent tress
That in loose tangles wanted in the wind;
The less she curled in rings, and with them twined
Flowers that, like lazuli in gold, impressed
A deeper charm on the beholder's mind;
Then to the native lilies of her breast
She joined the foreign rose, and smoothed her veil and vest.

XXIV.

Not Juno's bird such beauty spreads to show
In her eyed plumes so ravishingly bright,
Nor Iris such, when her celestial bow
Spans the dark cloud with gold and purple light;
But rich beyond all richness shines to sight
The glorious cest which 't is her wont to wear
At all times, e'en though naked, and at night;
A local shape she gave to things of air,
And in it blended all of lovely, sweet, and rare :—

XXV.

Tender disdains, repulses mild, feigned fears,
Kind looks, sweet reconcilements, blissful stings,
Smiles, little love-words, sighs, delicious tears,
Hopes, turtle kisses, music, marriage rings;
Embraces dear, and all ambrosial things
She fused, commingled slowly in the chaste
Bright fire, attempered in cool Lydian springs,
And fashioned thus this talisman of Taste,
Which, in itself a charm, clasps round her charming waist.

XXVI.

At length, their courtship o'er, she farewell took,
Gave him a kiss, sighed, smiled, and went her way;
For o'er the pages of her magic book,
Murmuring her charms, she spent some hours each day.
He, by a kind of charm compelled to stay,
Remained; for not one moment from these groves
Her jealous fear allowed his steps to stray :
Alone mid bees, birds, fountains, flowers, alcoves,
And grotts, save when with her, the hermit lover roves.

XXVII.

But when the soft and silent shade recalls
The ready lovers to their stolen delights,
Under one roof within the palace walls
They meet, and happy pass harmonious nights.
Now when Armida for severer rites
Had left her hermit love, her pleasant play,
And variegated garden, the two knights,
From the green bushes where concealed they lay,
Rushed forth in radiant arms whose light enriched the day.

XXVIII.

As the fierce steed, from busy war withdrawn
Awhile to riot in voluptuous ease,
Midst his loved mares loose wantons o'er the lawn,
If chance he hears once more upon the breeze
The spirit-stirring trumpet sound, or sees
The flash of armour, thither, far or near,
He bounds, he neighs, he prances o'er the leas,
Burning to whirl to war the charioteer,
Clash with the rattling car, and knap the sparkling spear.

XXIX.

So fared Rinaldo, when the sudden rays
Of their bright armour on his eye-balls beat;
At once those lightnings set his soul ablaze,
His ardour mounts to all its ancient heat;
Their vivid beam his sparkling eyes repeat,
Drowned though he was, and drunken with the wine
Of siren wantonness: on footsteps fleet,
Ubald meanwhile to where he lay supine
Came, and the diamond shield turned to him, pure and fine.

XXX.

Upon the lucid glass his eyes he rolled,
And all his delicacy saw; his dress,
Breathing rich odours, how it gleamed with gold!
How trimly curled was each lascivious tress!
And with what lady-like luxuriousness
His ornamented sword addressed his side!
So wrapt with flowers it swung, that none could guess
If 't was a wounding weapon, or applied
As a fantastic toy, voluptuous eyes to pride.

XXXI.

As one by heavy sleep in bondage held,
Comes to himself when the long dream takes flight,
So woke the youth when he himself beheld,
Nor could endure the satire of the sight:
Down fell his looks; and instantly, in spite
Of recollected pride, the colour came
Across his face;—in this embarrassed plight,
A thousand times he wished himself in flame,
Ocean, in earth, the' abyss, to shun the glowing shame.

XXXII.

Then spake Ubaldo; "Hearken and give ear!
Asia and Europe to the battle crowd;
Whoever counts or faith or glory dear,
Stands to the strife for Christ against Mahmoud.
Thee, son of Berthold, thee alone, the vowed
To honour and renown, loose idlesse charms
To a small angle of the world, more proud
To play the lover in a lady's arms,
Than champion deathless deeds,—thee only nought alarms!

XXXIII.

"What sleep, what lethargy, what base delights
Have melted down thy manhood, quenched thy zeal?
Up! up! thee Godfrey, thee the camp invites;
For thee bright Victory stays her chariot wheel.
Come, fated warrior, set the final seal
To our emprise! thy coming all expect;
Let the false Saracens confounded feel
That sword from which no armour can protect;
Haste, and in total death destroy the impious sect!"

XXXIV.

He ceased; the noble Infant for a space
Stood stupified, attempting no defence;
But soon as bashfulness to scorn gave place,
Scorn, the fine champion of indignant sense,
Then, with a yet diviner eloquence,
Another redness than of shame rushed o'er
His cheeks, almost atoning his offence;
The rich embroidered ornaments he wore,
Away with hasty hand indignantly he tore.

XXXV.

Begone he would, and through the intricate
Labyrinth of galleries from the garden fled;
Meanwhile Armida, by the regal gate
Starts to behold her savage keeper dead.¹⁶
At first a vague suspicion, a blind dread,
Then a quick feeling of the fatal truth
Instinctive flashed across her mind; her head
She turned, and saw (too cruel sight!) the youth
Haste from her blest abode, without concern or ruth.

XXXVI.

"Oh cruel! leav'st thou then Armida spurned?"
She would have said, but choking sorrow drowned
The issuing cry, and the faint words returned,
With bitter echo in her heart to sound:
Poor wretch! her happiness its term has found;
A power and wisdom above hers constrain
The youth to hurry from the' enchanted ground
With so much speed; she sees it, and in vain
Tries all her wonted arts, the recreant to retain.

XXXVII.

All dreadful strains that e'er Thessalian lips
Spoke to lost spirits, every potent spell
That could arrest the planets, or eclipse,
And call up demons disenchained from hell,
She knew, she tried, yet could not now compel
One gibbering ghost to answer to her cry;
Thus she gave o'er her incantations fell,
And would essay if stronger sorcery
Dwelt in pale Beauty's tear and supplicating eye.

XXXVIII.

Careless of honour, off she ran, she flew;
Where are her vaunts, ah, where her triumphs now!
She who the total sway of Love o'erthrew,
And judgment gave but by her bending brow;
And like her pride was her disdain! O how,
Loving their love, did she her slaves despise!
Herself alone could she at all allow
To pleasure her, nor aught in man could prize,
Beyond the' effect produced by her two radiant eyes.

XXXIX.

Left and neglected now, she follows swift
Him who forsakes her in his careless scorn;
And summons all her tears up, the poor gift
Of her rejected beauty to adorn:
Headlong she runs, unchecked by brier or thorn;
O'er rugged Alpine rocks and glaciers hoar
Her tender feet adventure to be torn;
Loud cries, as messengers, she sends before,
Which reach not him, till he has reached the winding shore.

XL.

Madly she cries; "O cruel fugitive!
That bear'st with thee my dearer half away,
Either take this, or that restore, or give
Death to them both together; stay, O stay!
Let my last words to thee at least find way,
I say not kisses; these sweet gifts from thee
Some worthier favourite may receive,—delay
Thy flight, unkind! what dost thou fear from me?
Thou canst as well refuse, when thou hast ceased to flee."

XLI.

"Signior," said then Ubaldo, "to refuge
Her wish, would be unkindness too severe:
Most sweetly bathed in sorrow's briny dews,
Armed with fond prayers and beauty she draws near;
Thy tempted virtue will shine forth more clear,
If, listening to the siren, thou remain
Proof to her winning voice and starting tear;
So Reason shall resume her peaceful reign
O'er sense, and thus refined, her native light regain."

XLII.

At this he stayed until she reached the shore;
Pale she came up, faint, breathless, all in tears,
And mournful past expression; but the more
She mourns, her beauty more divine appears:
Eager she eyes him; but mistrustful fears,
Disdain, amazement, or excess of woe
Keeps her quite mute; Rinaldo volunteers
No look, no glance at her, at least in show,
But stands with bashful eyes at stealth unclosing slow.

XLIII.

As skilful singers, ere they strain on high
Their voice in the loud song's symphonious flow,
Prepare the mind for the full harmony,
By sweetest preludes, warbled soft and low:
Thus she, who had not, e'en in deepest woe,
Wholly lost memory of her fraudulent art,
First breathed a symphony of sighs forth, so
By just degrees to predispose the heart,
To which her words the print of pity would impart.

XLIV.

Then thus; "Expect not I shall fondly bow,
Cruel! to thee, as loves to lovers should;
Such once we were,—if such no longer now,
If e'en the thought of thine impassioned mood
Move thy displeasure, as I judge, be wooed,
At least, my mournful plea to entertain,
As foemen the proud prayers of foes subdued;
My suit is such, as thou with little pain
Mayst grant, and yet keep all thy harshness and disdain.

XLV.

"If me thou hate, and ir it tak'st delight,
Hate on, I come not to disturb thy joy;
Just it may seem, just be it, for with spite
Thy sect, thyself I laboured to destroy!
What fierce expedients did I not employ,
A Pagan born, to sap your power! nay, more,
Thee did I hate, thee chase, and thee decoy
To the strange borders of an unknown shore,
Far from the din of arms, where only sea-waves roar.

XLVI.

"And, which seems most to move thy grief and shame,
Add with how much of tender, kind, and sweet,
Thy frozen heart I fondled into flame,
An impious fondness, sure, a vile deceit!
To let my virgin fruit be plucked and eat;
My blooms be spoiled; my tamelessness subdued,
And cast my beauties at a tyrant's feet!
Those youthful charms for which a thousand sued,
To a mere stranger given, unhoped, unwished, unwooed!

XLVII.

"Yes! number them amongst my sins, and let
These many crimes against thee hasten more
Thy prompt departure; heed not, but forget
This thy fair mansion, so beloved before!
Go, pass the seas; fight, glut thyself with gore;
Quick to the task! I bid thee o'er the brine;
Destroy our faith—'t will be but what you swore;
What say I? ours? ah no! not mine! not mine!
I, cruel idol! seek alone thy revered shrine!

XLVIII.

"Let me but follow thee! 't is all I crave;
This mightst thou grant, though I had proved unkind;
Seldom the conqueror parts without his slave,
The robber rarely leaves his prey behind:
Me with thy other hapless prisoners bind
For exhibition; to each other aim
At praiseful acts, let this, I pray, be joined,—
'That all may point the finger, and exclaim,
'There the proud scorner goes, now scorned with equal shame!'

XLIX.

"A bonds slave spurned, why longer do I keep
My locks unshorn, by thee now rendered vile?
Cut them clean off! the ground they shall not sweep,
To mock the misery of my servile style.
Thee will I follow from this hated isle;
Thee, when most fervent glows the fight, pursue
Through hostile crowds; I shall not want the while
Spirit or strength a thousand things to do,—
Bear darts, guide steeds, and strain myself the bending yew.

L.

"Either thy shield or shield-bearer, which best
May please thee, I in thy defence will be;
Nor spare my person,—through this throat and breast
The sword shall pass, before it injures thee:
The foe will scarce have so much cruelty
As to strike then, but will perhaps direct
Their darts elsewhere, not to endanger me;
And smother their fierce vengeance, in respect
Of these poor charms, to which thou dost such strange neglect.

LI.

"Wretch! do I still presume, still place my worth
In these scorned charms, which nothing can obtain!"
More would she say, but bitter tears gush forth,
Like springs from Alpine rocks, or falling rain:
She sought to grasp his hand; she sought to strain,
In suppliant attitude, his robes; but no—
Himself he curbed, his tenderness restrained,
And started back; love found no entrance, though
The swelling tears rose high, and stood prepared to flow.

LII.

Love entered not, to fan within his breast
 The ancient flame which reason had congealed;
 But Pity entered in its place at least,
 Love's chaste companion, ever prone to yield;
 And touched him so, that scarcely he concealed,
 Scarce, with much pain, the yearning tears repressed;
 Yet, though she loudly to his heart appealed,
 The fond emotion he within compressed,
 And when he could, the fair thus tranquilly addressed.

LIII.

"I feel for thee, Armida! if my powers
 Were such, how gladly would I cure the pain
 Of the ill-starred warm passion that devours
 Thy soul,—I have no hatred, no disdain;
 No wish for vengeance moves me; peace I fain
 Would give thee; wrongs I know not of, much less.
 Thee as a slave or foe would I retain;
 True, thou hast erred; and now all tenderness,
 Now all dislike, hast loved and hated to excess:

LIV.

"But these are frailties shared by all, and them
 Thy native laws, thy sex, and youth excuse;
 I too have sinned, nor thee can I condemn,
 If thou to pardon me dost not refuse.
 Midst the dear images I ne'er can lose,
 Thine shall be dearest still; on thee, sweet maid,
 In joy and woe 't will be my bliss to muse;
 Thy champion still—thou still shalt be obeyed,
 Far as with honour suits, and our divine crusade.

LV.

"Let now our mutual faults and follies cease,
 And with our faults our shame too have an end;
 And in this lonely island sleep in peace
 Their sad sweet memories, let them here descend
 As to the silent grave; where'er I wend,
 This only act of mine let no one trace,
 None whisper to the wind; nor thou, dear friend,
 Do, I implore thee, aught that would debase
 Thy name, thy worth, thy charms, or shame thy princely race!

LVI.

"Farewell! I go; thy wishes must be vain,
Fate grants them not; Armida, thou art wise!
Or go some happier way, or here remain,
And calm the thoughts that to such wildness rise."
She, whilst the pensive warrior thus replies,
Restless, disturbed, could scarce her passion stay;
Long time she rolled on him her angry eyes,
Nor knew in what fierce terms her scorn to say;
At length the storm broke loose, and these mad words found
way.

LVII.

"Thee no Sophia bore, no Azzo gave
Blood for thy being! thy fierce parents were
The icy Caucasus, the mad sea-wave,
Some Indian tiger or Hyrcanian bear!
Why should I longer fawn? did the man e'er
Shew but one sign of warm humanity?
Changed he his colour at my sharp despair?
Did he but dash one tear-drop from his eye?
Or breathe for all my pangs a single suffering sigh?"

LVIII.

"What things shall I pass over, what repeat?
He swears he's mine, yet with the whirlwind flies;
Good, merciful, kind victor! to forget,
And pardon your fond foe's indignities.
Hear how he counsels! hark but to his wise
And modest words! this coy Xenocrates,
Hear how he talks of love! O Gods! O skies!
And can you suffer holy men like these,
To burn your towers and towns, and act what sins they please?"

LIX.

"Begone, false wretch, with all that peace of mind
Thy treason leaves to me! begone, I say!
Soon shall my ghost, a haunting shade behind,
From which thou canst not tear thyself away,
Dog all thy thoughts by night, thy steps by day;
With snakes and torches, a new Fury, I,
Much as I loved thee, so much will dismay;
And if it be thy fate the strife to try,
Scaped from the roaring waves and tempests of the sky,—

LX.

"There, midst the dead and dying, thou shalt fall,
And pay for all my wrongs, false chevalier!
Oft on Armida's name distracted call,
In thy last groans, which soon I hope to hear!"
But there the mourner's spirit failed, nor clear
Were the last accents; her sweet colour flies,
She faints, she falls, her speaking lips adhere,
An icy sweat on her cold forehead lies,
Droops her dejected head, and close her radiant eyes.

LXI.

Thine eyes are closed, Armida; the stern powers
Of fate deny all solace to thy wee;
Look up, poor girl, and see what bitter showers
Stream from the eyes of thine imagined foe!
Couldst thou but hear his sighs, couldst thou but know
The pain he feels, it must thy love renew,
And in thy bitter cup fresh sweetness throw;
All that he can, he gives to thee, still true,
And takes (thou think'st it not), a last—a fond adieu.

LXII.

What should he do? leave on the naked sands
The Lady thus, betwixt alive and dead?
Pity forbids, and courtesy withstands,
But hard necessity compels,—'t is sped;
One farewell kiss,—he parts; the grot they tread,
And launch from land; mild blow the western gales
Midst the rich tresses of the pilot's head;
Fast o'er green ocean glide the golden sails;
To land he looks, till land his grieving vision fails.

LXIII.

Waked from her trance, Armida, with a start,
Looked round her,—all was silence; all was shade;
"And is he gone?" she said "and *had* he heart
To leave me thus, nor for a moment stayed,
In doubt of life or death, a little aid
To lend? nor for one moment lingered o'er,
To watch the pale, mute ruin he had made?
And do I love him still, and on this shore
With folded arms still sit, still unrevenged deplore?"

LXIV.

"Why weep I longer? other arms and arts
Command I not? I will the wretch pursue;
Nor shall the deep o'er which his bark departs,
Nor heaven's high vault secure him from his due!
I will o'ertake him; cleave his heart in two;
And hang his severed head upon a spot,
Where all like traitors may the monster view;
Versed as he is in guile, I will outplot
His brain,—alas, I rave! I talk I know not what!

LXV.

"Then, wretched girl! thou shouldst have wreaked thy hate,
When he lay safely curling in thy chain;
That had been something worth! now all too late
Come thy hot wrath and thy incensed disdain!
But, if my beauty and ingenious brain
Can nothing here, not fruitless shall this strong
And passionate desire of mine remain;
O my scorned charms! yours, yours was all the wrong;
To you shall the dear task of vengeance now belong.

LXVI.

"These charms of mine shall be the fixed reward
Of him who slays the man! your swords prepare,
O my famed lovers! though the task seem hard,
Yet great and glorious is the deed you dare:
I, who in independent state shall wear
The crown of rich Damascus, will be nigh,
In guerdon of the victim; if this rare
Reward appear too poor, revenge to buy,
Nature! I thank thee not for charms ill praised so high.

LXVII.

"False, fatal gifts! I spurn you back; I scorn
The hated kingdom which I have to give;
I hate my life, the hour when I was born,
Alone in hope of sweet revenge I live!"
In broken words, enraged, thus does she grieve,
Thus rave; then turns with a distracted pace
From the lone shore, the moments to retrieve;
Shewing what fury in her heart found place,
By her dishevelled hair, fierce eyes, and crimsoning face.

LXVIII.

Reached her abode, with foaming lips she called
Three hundred ghosts from Tartarus the dun ;
Black clouds the tranquil face of heaven appalled,
Pale in a moment grew the' eternal sun ;
The whirlwinds blustered on the hills, air spun,
Hell bellowed at her feet ; then might you hear
Through the enchanted halls the damned run,
Unchained and raging, now far-off, now near,—
Shrieks, hissings, yells, drear groans, and whisperings yet
more drear.

LXIX.

A raven shade, more dark than darkest night,
Cloaked all the hill, enlivened by no ray,
Save now and then dull flashes of blue light,
That made the following gloom yet more dismay :
Slowly at length the blackness cleared away ;
The round pale sun shone out, but nothing clear ;
Gloomy the earth, the air was aught but gay,
Nor of the palace did one trace appear,
Nor would you venture now, e'en to exclaim, 't was here.

LXX.

As when the clouds at summer eve have drawn
In air huge towers and temples, they remain
Till wind or sunshine comes, and straight they're gone,
Like a dream figured in the sick man's brain :
So melt the' enchanted towers, with all their train
Of rich delights, and leave but for the eye
The hoary face of nature,—the still main,
Brown hills, and frowning woods. Her chariot nigh
She as is usual mounts, and fast away doth fly.

LXXI.

The clouds she cleaves, and round her doth enrol
Thunders and tempests, lightnings, wave, and wind ;
The regions subject to the southern pole,
And all their unknown natives left behind,
Calpe she crossed ; nor, in her fretful mind,
Stooped to the Spaniard, or the Moor, but o'er
The Midland Sea her winged car inclined ;
Nor to the right, nor to the left hand bore,
Till in mid air she reached the known Assyrian shore.

LXXII.

Not now to fair Damascus does she post,
But shuns the aspect of her once dear land,
And guides her chariot to the Dead-Sea coast,
Where the strong-holds of the Enchantress stand.
Alighting here, she from her duteous band
Of damsels and of pages hides her face,
And, wandering lonely on the sea-beat strand,
Fluctuates from scheme to scheme in doubtful case,
But soon all shame to rage and wished revenge gives place.

LXXIII.

"Yes, hence I will," she cried, "before his swarms
The' Egyptian king shall move in Sion's aid;
Each art react, remuster all my charms,
To every uncouth thing my sex degrade,
That may assist my purpose;—undismayed,
Handle the brand and bow, become the flame
Of the most potent, and direct his blade;
Let me but have the just revenge I claim,
Farewell, vain self-respect! farewell, fond maiden shame!

LXXIV.

"And for the faults I shall hereby commit,
Let my sage guardian blame himself, not me;
He first to thoughts and offices unfit
Set my frail sex and daring spirit free;
He made me first a gadding damsel, he
Spurred on my ardour, loosed me from the rein
Of timorous awe and shame-faced modesty;
His be the guilt of all then that may stain,—
All I have done through love, or may do through disdain."

LXXV.

Thus fixed, she gathered in, on Arab steeds,
Damsels, and knights, and servitors in haste;
And in their sumptuous arms and woman's weeds,
Displayed at once her fortune and fine taste.
Forward she set; and, journeying the wild waste,
Took nor repose by night, nor rest by day,
Till her keen eye along the' horizon traced
The' Egyptian hosts, that in their mailed array
Wide o'er the sunbright sands of antique Gaza lay.

END OF CANTO XVI.



JERUSALEM DELIVERED.

CANTO XVII.





Stanza Ivili.

ARGUMENT.

His countless swarms the' Egyptian Prince reviews,
 And 'gainst the Croises sends them forth ; Armide,
 Who, still incensed, Rinaldo's death pursues,
 Joins with her train the hosts ere they proceed ;
 And, with the surer certainty and speed
 To wreak her will, presents her charms divine,
 In guerdon of revenge ; the Hero, freed,
 Puts on invulnerable arms, where shine
 In bold relief the deeds of his illustrious line.

JERUSALEM DELIVERED.

CANTO XVII.

I.

UPON Judea's confines, on the way
That leads to old Pelusium, Gaza stands;
Built on the shore, it overlooks the bay,
And on the east the bordering tract commands,—
A fruitless waste, a solitude of sands,
Which, like the waters of the tossing main,
The breathing whirlwind spreads o'er all the lands;
And scarce the pilgrim can his course maintain,
Against the frequent storm that sweeps the unstable plain.

II.

The Caliph's frontier city, it had been
Won from the Turk, the fruit of old debates;
And being situate nearest to the scene
Of the vast enterprise he meditates,
The seat of empire hither he translates
From Cairo, bordering on the Red-Sea coasts,
His sumptuous Capital: from all his States
The flower of warriors which each province boasts,
He has assembled here, and musters now his hosts.

III.

Muse! to my mind recall those by-gone times;
Say what was then the standing state of things;
What powers the Caliph moved, from what far climes,
What troops of vassals, and what trains of kings;
The hosts, the leaders and the arms he brings
From the wide Orient to the South, rehearse!
Thou, only thou hast power to' unlock the springs
Of antique story, and assist my verse
In arms to venture half the banded universe!

IV.

When from the Grecian Caesar Egypt first
Rebelledd, a warrior from the' Arabian Seer
Sprung, in the same fierce superstition nursed,
Tyrant became, and fixed his kingdom here :
Califfe the chief was called, a name of fear,
And those who after him the sceptre held,
Took the same term, as Nile, from year to year,
Her Pharaohs first, then Ptolemies beheld,
Renewed from sire to son, till both this third expelled.

V.

Long years their empire had confirmed, and now
Behold its spacious bounds ! it comprehends
Libya, from where the palms of Barca bow,
Cyrene towers, and Marmarica bends ;
Thence, passing southward up the Nile, extends
To where in lonely state Syene stands ;
And, compassing unpeopled countries, ends
In spicy sweet Sabæa's happy lands,
And where Euphrates winds his way through silent sands.

VI.

To right and left in its embrace it boasts
The rich Red Sea and all its incensed shore,
On to the regions of those Eastern coasts,
Whose suns the Persian did whilere adore :
Much is the kingdom in itself ; but more,
Ruled by a king resolving to assert
The ancient honours and renown it bore,—
A prince by blood, but more so by desert,
In every warlike art and policy expert.

VII.

Oft 'gainst the Persians, 'gainst the Turks he reared
His flag, assailing or assailed ; the same,
Conquering or conquered, save that he appeared
Greater, o'ercome, than when he overcame :
Now, grey with age, he left the toilsome game,
The soldier's hauberk for the caliph's gown,
And sheathed his sabre ; but the warrior's flame
Still warmed his heart, nor did he yet lay down
The' ambitious will that grasped at limitless renown.

VIII.

Still through his ministers he wars, and yet
So full of vigorous intellect appears,
That the vast frame of empire seems a weight
Too slight to cumber much his wintry years.
Libya through all her petty kingdoms fears
His nod, and trembles at his naked blade ;
Remotest India his decree reveres ;
And one and all send tributary aid,
Either in troops, or gold, with prompt submission paid.

IX.

Such was the king who from each Orient realm
Had summoned forth, and now impels the flower
Of his vast forces northward, to o'erwhelm
The conquering Franks, and crush their rising power.
Last comes Armida, in the very hour
Fixed by the king his armies to survey,
Apt for review : apart from tent and tower,
On the vast plain the hosts, at break of day,
Proudly before him pass in orderly array.

X.

High on a sumptuous throne he takes his seat,
Climbed by a hundred ivory steps ; his tread
Is upon gold and purple ; from the heat,
A spacious sky of silver shades his head ;
In glittering interchange of white and red,
Diamond and rubies grace his robes, not spare
Of more barbaric ornaments ; instead
Of the gemmed diadem, white linen fair,
Wrapt round in thousand folds, crowns high his reverend hair.

XI.

His right hand holds the sceptre,—white as snow
Descends his venerable beard ; serene
With some severity, his eyes yet glow
With their first fires, intelligent and keen :
In all his acts the majesty was seen
Of age and empire, majesty, that knew
No change of state ; perchance with such a mien
Great Phidias sculptured, and Apelles drew
Jove the divine, but Jove as he his thunders threw !

XII.

Near him to right and left two Satraps stand,
Pre-eminent,—the one of most renown
Sustains the sword of justice in his hand,
Unsheathed; the other bears beneath his gown
The' imperial seal, and, counsel to the crown,
Transacts the civil business of the state;
But he who wears a more habitual frown,
Has powers more terrible—high magistrate,
Prince of the hosts, and sworn executor of fate.

XIII.

Below, a standing guard around the throne,
His Mamalukes plant their lances, thick and wide,
Armed not with spears and cuirasses alone,
But long curved sabres pendant at their side.
Thus sate the Tyrant; and at leisure eyed,
From his high station, the collected cloud
Of nations pass: ministrant to his pride,
Low at his feet in passing, the mute crowd
Their ensigns, arms, and plumes in meek devotion bowed.

XIV.

First march the' Egyptian troops, four squadrons, led
Each by a chief; two in her Upper plain
Where heavenly Nile uprises, and two bred
Amidst her Lower regions, a domain
Won by his waters from the salt-sea main,—
Their rich alluvial slime outstretched the shore,
And, settling, formed a fruitful soil for grain;
Thus Egypt grew, and what was sea before,
Is now far inland ground, obnoxious to the oar.

XV.

In the first troop appear the dusky race
Whom the rich plain of Alexandria breeds;
With those who dwell along the coasts that face
The glowing West, a region that succeeds
The Libyan Isthmus; these Araspes leads,
A proud and potent Chief, but less renowned
For hardy valour than for crafty deeds,
In every art of Moorish war profound,
Skilled in false flights to' attack, in ambuscades to wound.

XVI.

Next come the tribes that front the morning star
And Asian coasts ; they rank beneath the crest
Of soft Arontes, whom no deeds of war,
But rank and titles raise to some request.
Ne'er has the helm till now his temples pressed ;
Nor e'er till now have the shrill serenades
Of morning trumpets broke his pleasant rest ;
But fond ambition him at last persuades,
To try the soldier's life and leave his native shades.

XVII.

The third that follows seems no single band,
But a vast host ; it fills the fields and shore ;
You'd think that all the harvests of the land
Were, for such swarms, an insufficient store :
Yet them a single City, ranked before
Whole provinces in strength, wherein reside
Myriads of men—Grand Cairo sends ; thence pour
The mighty swarms that pass, troops yet untried
In the debates of war, and Campson is their guide.

XVIII.

Next under Gazel march the men who reap
The grain that in the bordering garden grows
Far up the River, to the lofty steep
O'er which its second cataract foaming flows.
All these Egyptians have but swords and bows ;
No helm their heads, no cuirass fortifies
Their breasts, but passing rich their vesture shews,
Which leads the foe in battle to despise
Chance of impending death, in passion for the prize.

XIX.

Next come, half naked and unarmed, the hordes
Of Barca, ranked beneath Alarcon's sway,
Who for long ages with voracious swords
Have ranged the deserts, and sustained by prey
Their famished lives ; more civilized than they,
But inexpert in marshalled war, succeed
Those who Zumara's turbaned king obey,
And them from Tripoli ; they both exceed
In flying fights, and wound with all a Parthian's speed.

XX.

Then follow those who in Arabia dwell,
The Stony, and the Happy land, which knows
Neither (if true the tales that pilgrims tell),
The' excess of summer heats or winter snows :
Where flourishes the balm, the spikenard blows ;
Where dies the' immortal Phoenix to assume
Fresh life, with leaves of myrtle and of rose,
And each diviner plant of sweet perfume,
Building at once her bower, her cradle, and her tomb.

XXI.

With bow and scimeter resembling those
The' Egyptians bear, less dainty is their dress ;
Their dark array the Bedouin Arabs close,
Who no fixt region or abodes possess ;
But o'er the wild unstable wilderness
Their migratory tents and cities bear,
Perpetual pilgrims ; womenlike, not less
Shrill are their voices, short their forms and spare,
Long their wild raven locks, their faces just as fair.

XXII.

Long Indian canes, with iron tipt, they bear,
And upon steeds so nimble sweep along,
You'd say a whirlwind blew them past, if e'er
The wings of whirlwinds had a speed so strong.
Syphax the first undisciplined rude throng
Commands ; the next Aldino trains for fight ;
The rest to fierce Albiazar belong,
Whom rapine, wounds, and blood alone delight,
A sort of kingly thief—a murderer, not a knight.

XXIII.

Then pass the Islanders with fleecy curls,
Whose homes are compassed by the' Arabian waves ;
By whom those shells which breed the Persian pearls
Are dived and fished for, in their Green-Sea caves.
With them are joined a host of sable slaves,
Negroes, along the coasts of Nubia born ;
Foremost of those king Agricalt outbraves
The best, whilst these obey Osmida's horn,
A wretch that mocks at faith, and laughs all law to scorn.

XXIV.

The Isle of Meröe next its Ethiops sends,
Which Nilus there, and Astrabora here
Gird with their waves; three realms it comprehends,
And two religions in its spacious sphere:
Them young Canario leads, and Asimire,
Both monarchs, both Mahometans, and both
The Caliph's tributary friends; but here
The third comes not,—the Caliph would be loth
Or to employ his arms, or trust his Christian oath.

XXV.

Two other subject kings, in brave array,
Bring up their archers next, a goodly band;
The first from Ormus, which the Persian bay
Encompasses, a rich luxurious land,—
The last from Böecan, whose banks of sand
The' embracing ocean at high tide sweeps o'er,
And forms an isle; but shortly, from its strand,
When the tide ebbs, men scorn the billows' roar,
And with unmoistened feet pass safe from shore to shore.

XXVI.

Nor could a much-loved wife, great Altamore,
Thee in her happy bridal bed detain;
Her breast she beat, her golden tresses tore,
To stay thy fatal voyage, but in vain.
"Cruel!" she said, "has then the frightful main
A face than mine more lovely or more mild?
And can it seem more pleasant to sustain
The sword and shield with bloody dust defiled,
Than kiss thy consort's cheek, and dance thine infant child?"

XXVII.

He is the king of Samarcand; his crown
Is free, but not in this his glories dwell;
Well versed in arms, his courage and renown
All others' courage and renown excel;
The' unconscious Franks shall know it but too well,
Already have they cause to fear his face:
His soldiers, each rude weapon to repel,
Wear coats of mail, fine helms their temples grace,
Their thighs the sword display, their saddle-bows the mace.

XXVIII.

“Lo, next, where fierce Adrastus from far Ind,
Aurora's land, comes frowning! he nor bears
Breastplate nor helm, but for a charm, behind,
A rich green snake-skin streaked with sable wears:
Thus armed, all dangers of the fight he dares;
Upon a monstrous elephant he rides,
His constant wont when he for war prepares;
From this side Ganges he the people guides,
That live where Indus rolls to sea his mighty tides.

XXIX.

Next come the king's own troops, choice warriors, classed
The flower of Memphian chivalry; all those
Who with most honour and renown had passed
Through peace and war, this body-guard compose:
Armed for security and fear, each shews
A barb obedient to his armed heel;
And heaven itself smiles, sparkles, shines, and glows
From their array—as round the field they wheel,—
Helm, cuirass, mantle, plume; gems, crimson, gold, and steel.

XXX.

Here rides Alarco fierce, and Odemar,
Marshaller of armies; Idraote, Rimedon,
For proud audacity renowned afar,
Who laughs at death, and veils his plume to none;
Rapoldo, glorious for his murders done,
Corsair and tyrant of the sea; inflamed
Tigranes, Ormond, whom the mighty shun,
And Marlabust Arabicus, surnamed
From the rebellious hordes his sword so oft has tamed.

XXXI.

Orindo, Pirga, Arimon, Brimarte,
Scaler of towns, are here with swift Siphante,
Tamer of steeds; and, of the wrestler's art
Thou the great master, strong Aridamante!
And, foremost upon tower and crag to plant
His standard, thunderbolt of war, severe
Young Tisaphernes! with whom none can vaunt
Like skill, in tilt or tourney to career,
On foot the sword to wave, in selle to toss the spear.

XXXII.

A brave Armenian guides them, who in youth,
Unfixed in Christ, Mahometan became;
Then Clement he was called, but from the truth
Departing, Emirene is now his name;
In all besides a man of noble fame,
Dear to the Caliph above all his band
Of Satraps,—equal honour may he claim,
Soldier or chief, in action or command,
For wisdom, dauntless heart, and valiant strength of hand.

XXXIII.

All were now passed; when lo! in splendid state
Appears Armida, and her troop displays;
With robes succinct, high on her car she sate,
Armed like the quivered Goddess of the chase.
The new displeasure in her angel face
Mixed with the native sweetness which it wore,
To its fine features gave but sharper grace;
Wounded herself, deep wounds and torments sore
She seems, incensed, to threat, and threatening charms the
more.

XXXIV.

Her car, that glorious as Aurora's rolled,
With rubies, pearls, and hyacinths glistened clear;
Four pairs of unicorns, with yokes of gold,
Pass to the rich reins of the charioteer.
A hundred pages and fair girls appear
Near her, whose quivers at their backs resound;
Smart archers all, they o'er the plain career
On milk-white steeds, well practised to wheel round,
And swift with horny hoofs spurn back the dinted ground.

XXXV.

Her army follows, from Damascus sent
By Idraote, and led by Aradine;—
As when the new-born Phoenix makes ascent
To visit her warm realms beneath the Line,
With golden crown, starred wings, and necklace fine
Of all rich feathers—purple, crimson, green,
A sparkling carcanet,—her state divine
The world beholds amazed, and round their queen
A crowd of awestruck birds fly, glorying in her sheen.

XXXVI.

So passed Armida, so Armida shined
In habit, gesture, and commanding grace !
Nor was there one so stern and uninclined
To love, but glowed those beauties to embrace.
If she can charm in this her sullen case
Nations so various, in so short a while,
What will she do when with a happy face
She pays court to them in her sweetest style,
Woos with her radiant eyes, and thrills with her fond smile !

XXXVII.

But when she too in her admired costume
Had passed applauded, and the pageant closed,
The king for Emerino sent, to whom,
Preferred to all his captains, he proposed
To give the sole direction of the host ;
Divining his intent the Chief attends,
And with an air that shews him for the post
Well-worthy, comes,—the guard asunder rends,
Leaving a midway path, and he the throne ascends.

XXXVIII.

He bows his head, he bends his knee, his hand
Lays on his heart, and thus the king : " To thee
This sceptre, Emirene, to thy command,
I yield these hosts,—rule thou in lieu of me ;
Setting the subject king of Judah free,
Bear not the sword of my revenge in vain ;
Go, see, and conquer ! let no Christian be
Saved from the slaughter, or, if some remain,
Let them to me be brought, and fill no gentle chain."

XXXIX.

Thus spoke the Tyrant ; and the turbaned Peer
The sovereign rule accepting, thus replied :
" From thy unconquered hand, blest Sire, I here
The sceptre take, with fortune for my guide !
Strong in thy strength, thy captain, I confide
Herein to' avenge upon the Latin race
All Asia's wrongs ; but this let strokes decide ;
Ne'er but as victor will I see thy face ;
The war our death may bring,—it shall not bring disgrace.

XL.

"Heaven grant, if all (though none indeed I dread),
Should be ordained to trouble our success,
The whole black storm may burst upon my head!
Safe be the host, and its dead leader less
In funeral sorrow than the happiness
Of pomp triumphal home be borne along!"
Thus spake the Chief; and closing his address,
Loud shouts arose from all that mighty throng,
With harsh barbaric sounds from atabal and gong.

XLI.

Midst this wild music and these shouts, the king,
Girt by his brave Circassians, left the throne
For the gay tent, and to rich banqueting
The Chiefs inviting, took his seat alone;
Whence, now rich dainties, now in pleasant tone
He graceful compliments to each addressed,
Not one neglecting; here when all were flown
With mirth, the wine-cup circling with the jest,
Fit space Armida found, her project to digest.

XLII.

But, the feast finished, and all eyes intent
On her fair aspect, she, who clearly read
By well-known signs that to her heart's content
Her pleasing poison in all minds was shed,
Rose, turned towards the king her graceful head,
And, in an attitude 'twixt grief and cheer,
Reverence and inborn haughtiness, thus said;
Studying in voice and gesture to appear,
Much as she could, serene, fierce, generous and severe.

XLIII.

"I too am come, great king! to dare the worst,
Firm for our faith, our country, and our right;
A Lady, true, but in a palace nursed,—
A Princess sure may well become the fight.
Who hopes to rule an empire, should not slight
One brave accomplishment,—the self-same hand
Should poise the spear as sceptre; mine shall smite,
(Nor slow, nor torpid to the bow or brand),
And learn with foeman's blood to fertilize the land.

XLIV.

"Think not that now for the first time the star
Of glory lights me to this noble aim ;
That only now I have been prompt by war
To' uphold our laws, and fortify the frame
Of thy vast empire ! whether what I name
Be true, or uttered out of vain parade,
Thou shouldst thyself remember,—thou my fame
Hast heard—what troops of those who bear displayed
The Redcross, Nobles all, my captive slaves I made :—

XLV.

"They in my snares were taken, were secured,
And as a noble gift to thee were sent,
And might have lain perpetually immured
In thy dark dungeons,—such was mine intent,—
So hadst thou now gone forth more confident
Of ending, by a glorious victory,
The desperate conflict upon which we're bent,
Had not Rinaldo, doomed our curse to be,
Slain my appointed guards, and set the prisoners free.

XLVI.

"Who this Rinaldo is, is not unknown ;
The world's but too much pestered with his name ;
This is the savage who has overthrown
Our hopes, nor have I yet avenged the shame.
Hence does fierce anger, with just cause, inflame
My rising spirit ; hence does it inspire
This my resolve to arms ; I am all flame :
For other wrongs I have, but they would tire,
Let what is said suffice ; revenge is my desire.

XLVII.

"And I revenge will have ! all shafts the skies
Cut not in vain, some work the shooter's will ;
And Allah oft his red right hand applies
To dart his bolts against triumphant ill.
But lo ! if any will the ruffian kill,
Cut off the head I so much hate to see,
And cast it reeking at my feet, his skill
Shall have my thanks ; the vengeance sweet will be ;
But O, ten times more sweet, if wrought indeed by me !

XLVIII.

"Yes, 't will be sweet; so sweet, I will resign
What most I prize, what numbers vainly sued,
My crown, my marriage portion, and, in fine,
Myself, if that be the reward he would.
All these I vow, and make my promise good
By the firm oath; all solemnly I swear
Inviolable faith and gratitude
Through life; if any think the proffer fair,
Let him in terms as frank the rising thought declare!"

XLIX.

When thus the Lady had proclaimed her mind,
Adrastus, greedy of her charms, replied;
"Now Heaven forbid thy shafts should be so kind
As to destroy the barbarous homicide!
So base a heart—does it deserve," he cried,
"That thou, fair Amazon, its blood should shed?
Forego the thought! and in my arm confide
To gratify thy wrath, revenge the dead,
And at thy saintly feet to roll his odious head!"

L.

"I'll pluck his heart out; to the vultures I
Will, joint by joint, his carcass cast!" thus spoke
The swarthy Indian; but his vaunting high
The gallant Tisaphernes ill could brook:
"And who," he cried, with anger in his look,
"Art thou, who giv'st thyself such gorgeous airs
Before the king, nor fear'st our fierce rebuke?
Look round! here's one perchance at least that dares
Outact thy mighty vaunts, though more his words he spares."

LI.

Quick the fierce Indian answered; "I am one
Whose deeds were never by his words surpassed;
But if elsewhere thy insolence had run
To such excess, the insult were thy last."
And here from threats to blows they soon had passed,
But all repressed the quarrel, and between
Both chiefs the monarch his dread sceptre cast;
Then to Armida said: "Illustrious queen!
Thy soul indeed is great, thy manly courage keen."

LII.

"Worthy thou art that these abase their pride
To thee, and in the sweet abasement joy;
That thou hereafter mayst their sabres guide
With surer aim, that felon to destroy;
There let both chiefs their chivalry employ,
And in a happier field their worth contest:"
This said, the monarch ceased; they, nothing coy,
Offer again on scorned Rinaldo's crest
To prove whose sworded arm shall wreak her vengeance best.

LIII.

Nor these alone; but all the heroes there,
Renowned in war, ambitious of her bed,
Offer with vaunts their services,—all swear
To take revenge on his accursed head.
So many arms she moved! such hatreds bred
Against the knight whom late her tender love
Wooped with all sweets! but he, since first he fled
The' enchanted isle, and the blue ocean clove,
Swiftly before the wind with all good omens drove.

LIV.

In the same track that it before had ploughed,
The charmed gondola is homeward borne;
And every air that sings in sail and ahroud,
With equal kindness speeds its gay return:
The youth now marks, stretched pensive at the stern,
The Pleiads smile, the misty Hyads weep;
Now round the Pole the Bears slow wheeling turn;
And now, as twilight tints cascade and steep,
The rocks whose umber woods o'erhang the shaded deep.

LV.

Now of the Camp, of foreign nations now,
The various customs he inquires, and weighs;
And thus the briny seas they ceaseless plough,
Three starry nights, and three sunshiny days.
But when the fourth calm sun with farewell rays
Far o'er the waters of the west descends,
The grounding vessel its swift motion stays;
Then spoke the damsel; "Palestine, my friends,
Is won! your voyage here, and here my duty ends."

LVI.

She set the knights ashore, and disappeared,
Ere they could take farewell, or say, she's gone!
Meanwhile the Night her sable standard reared,
All hues and objects mingling into one.
Long o'er those waste sands, through the twilight dun,
The knights gazed anxious to discern some ray
From tower or cottage-shed, but light was none;
Nor step of man, nor tract of beast astray,
Nor aught beside was seen that might direct their way.

LVII.

Forward at length they move, and when the dash
Of breaking billows, on the shingles rolled,
Melts from their ear, far off a sudden flash
Of something radiant may their eyes behold;
Which, with mild silver rays and gleams of gold
Making the lone night beautiful, withdraws
The shadowy screen that had before controlled
Their confidence and cheer; they make no pause,
But to the light advance, and soon perceive the cause.

LVIII.

Arms newly forged they see, to a tall elm
Against the rising moon suspended high,
Whence sparkling gems, upon the gilded helm
And mail, shed fire as from a starlight sky:
Near as they draw, much rich-wrought imagery,
Footmen, and knights that on war-horses ride,
On the vast shield emblazoned they descry;
An aged watchman sat the arms beside,
Who to receive them rose, when their approach he spied.

LIX.

Well the two warriors knew the ancient face
For that of their wise host and courteous friend;
He straight received them with a warm embrace,
And when their mutual courtesies had end,
Turned to the Youth, who silent seemed to send
To the tall form he revered and admired,
An asking eye, and greeting said; "Attend,
My son! thee solely in this place retired
I wait, and much to see thy aspect have desired.

LX.

"For know, I am thy friend, and for thy good
How truly I have cared, inquire of these;
Who, taught by me, the' enchantments have subdued,
That bound thy life up in voluptuous ease.
Mark now my heavenly precept, which agrees
With perfect bliss, though adverse to the smooth
Seducing siren's; let it not displease,
But keep it well in mind, till in the truth
A wiser, holier tongue instruct thine erring youth.

LXI.

"Not underneath green shades, by fountains shrill,
Amidst the nymphs and sirens, fruits and flowers,
Is placed our bliss, but on the steep rough hill
Of virtue, climbed through sunshine, snow, and showers;
He that, embosomed in Idalian bowers,
Treads but gay Pleasure's primrose path, will ne'er
Reach the high crown; the royal eagle towers
Round the steep cliff, and thou, wilt thou forbear
To spurn the lowly vale, and fix thine eyrie there?

LXII.

"Nature has given thee elevated thought,
Nature has raised thy face toward the skies,
That thou shouldst look erect, and by well-wrought
Heroic deeds to loftiest glory rise:
Nature has given thee ardent sympathies,
And a brisk wrath, not on each slight pretence
To waste in civil broils, nor yet, unwise,
To be the ministers of appetite,
And every loose delight discordant to good sense:

LXIII.

"But that thy valour, by these passions armed,
With more success thy outward foes may quell;
And check the lusts with which the heart is charmed,
When the strong demons in the blood rebel:
The wise man governs and applies them well
Each to the proper end for which 't is plain
They were assigned,—now bids them sink, now swell,
As intellectual Reason does ordain,
Prompt to impel them now, now cautious to restrain."

LXIV.

Thus spake the Senior; the hushed youth, intent,
Stored in his grateful memory all he said,
And, conscious of his errors, meekly bent
His eyes to earth, with cheeks all rosy red.
Well marked the Sage the sweet confusion spread,
Well guessed the secret sentiments that rolled
Across his mind, and added; "Raise thy head;
And in this sculptured shield, my son, behold
What thy illustrious sires achieved in days of old.

LXV.

"Of thy dead ancestors the long bright track
Shall be revealed thee in this desert place,
Whilst thou, degenerate loiterer, hangest back,
Nor stirr'st a step in glory's ardent race!
Arouse thyself; up! up! thy spirit brace;
Let what I here point out to thee, incite
Thy slumbering valour, their renown to grace."
Thus spoke the Sage; and, as he spoke, the knight
Fixed on the pictured shield his keen perusing sight.

LXVI.

The learned sculptor, with a master's hand,
In narrow field unnumbered forms had done;
Here all the race of glorious Azzo stand,
In long unbroken order, sire and son.
The pure unspotted streams were seen to run
From the old Roman source in ancient days;
The Lords stand crowned with laurel; one by one,
The hoary Sage selects them, and displays
Their wars and glorious deeds, and points his speech with
praise.

LXVII.

He shewed him Caius, when to foreign foes
The nodding Empire first became a prey,
As the first prince of Esté, fairly chose
By a glad people, proud his will to' obey;
And how the weaker neighbouring states each day
Flocked to his wing for safety; how he bore
O'er them free rule; and, when by his weak sway
Honorius called the Goths, to make once more
The bold and bloody march which they had made before;—

LXVIII.

And when all Italy appeared in flame
From their barbaric torch, and weeping Rome,
A slave and prisoner, mourned her perished fame,
And feared the dreadful trumpet of her doom,
How well Aurelius, in that hour of gloom,
Preserved his vassals wholly unenslaved;
Then how, distinguished by his lofty plume,
The bold Foresto resolutely braved
The Hun whose barbarous flag Italian breezes waved.

LXIX.

By his grim aspect Attila was known,
His eyes like dragons' flashing through the dark;
With his dog's visage who beheld him frown,
Would soothly swear they heard him snarl and bark:
Then, foiled in duel, you the man might mark
Steal off amidst his train, in shame and rage,—
And how from Aquileia's towers, the ark
Of Roman liberty, Foresto sage
Rolled back the storm of war, the Hector of his age.

LXX.

He fell, and half the fabric with him fell
Of his loved country! Acarine, his son,
Built up the breaches, and defended well
The' Italian bulwarks, as his sire had done:
To the strong Fates, not to the savage Hun,
He yielded up Altino, soon renewed
Upon a safer site,—he joined in one
A thousand scattered seats and hamlets rude,
Where through a fruitful vale his course the Po pursued.

LXXI.

With walls he banked it, in all points complete,
Strong to withstand the' o'erflowing river's rage;
Thus rose the city doomed to be the seat
Of Esté's princes in a later age:
Drawn is he driving from his heritage
The savage Alans; next, with crimson glaive,
Venturing with Odoacer to engage,
He dies for Italy; what fate more brave,
Than thus to share at once his sire's renown and grave!

LXXII.

With him fell Alphorasio; Azzo sad
 With his dear brother into exile goes,
 Soon to return with arms and counsel, glad
 The tyrant's power hath found a timely close.
 Near him, an arrow in his eyeball, shews
 Esté's Epaminondas, he who sealed
 With blood his patriot vows! he in the throes
 Of doom dies happy, since from the red field
 Fierce Totila is fled, and saved his darling shield.

LXXIII.

Of Boniface I sing: his boyish son,
 Valerian, follows in his steps; his brand,
 And his already manly arm, not one
 Of all the Gothic squadrons dare withstand.
 Near, of ferocious aspect, sword in hand,
 Sculptured is bold Ernesto, cap-a-pee,
 Smiting the wild Slavonians from the land;
 Then comes the' intrepid Aldoardo, he
 Who shut the Lombard king from fair Montselice.

LXXIV.

Henry was there, with Berenger, whose might,
 When Charlemagne his flag august displayed,
 Was still seen foremost in the ranks of fight,
 Whether he ruled the squadron, or obeyed.
 Him Lewis followed,—he from friendly made
 Adverse, against that nephew who the throne
 Of Italy possessed, bold battle weighed,—
 Conquered, and took him captive; next was shewn
 Otho, by his five sons indisputably known.

LXXV.

Here shines Almerico, first Marquis styled
 Of that fair City, Princess of the Po;
 His musing attitude, and glances mild
 To heaven upraised, his pious spirit shew,
 Founder of churches and of shrines; but lo,
 In other mood the second Azzo wars
 With Berengarius, his immortal foe!
 Who, after various turns of fate, withdraws,
 O'ercome, and Azzo gives the' Italian cities laws.

LXXVI.

Albert, his son, in Germany maintains
 His fame; his chivalry is voiced so wide,
 From warring, conquering, tilting with the Danes,
 That Otho wooes his daughter for a bride,
 With a large dowry; next him, is desiered
 The gallant Ugo with his waving crest,
 Whose valour tamed the horns of Roman pride;
 He, Marquis now of Italy addressed,
 Beneath his guardian care all Tuscany possessed.

LXXVII.

The eye Tebaldo, next, and Boniface
 Close by his Beatrice's side, engage;
 Then no male heir of the illustrious race
 Lives to enjoy the extensive heritage.
 Matilda follows, who in sex and age
 Well that defect supplied by her renown
 And hardy deeds; fair, brave, discreet, and sage,
 Beyond the golden sceptre, throne, and crown,
 She had the power to' advance the wimple, coif, and gown.

LXXVIII.

A manlike spirit sparkled in her eye,
 A more than manlike courage armed her look;
 The Normans beat, she forced their chief to fly,
 Guiscard, who ne'er before the field forsook;
 Here the fourth Henry broke, his standard took,
 And with the spoil the solemn temple graced;
 And there the Pontiff who the thunders shook
 Of the dread Vatican, his pride abased,
 In high Saint Peter's chair with dignity replaced.

LXXIX.

Now at her side, now seconding her views,
 With looks of reverence and of love, is seen
 Azzo the Fifth; but, blest with all kind dewa,
 From the fourth Azzo's stock upshooting green,
 Yet happier branches beautify the scene;
 Lo, where to Germany Lord Guelpho goes!
 (Guelpho, his son, by Cunigond his queen)
 Thus in Bavarian fields, transplanted, grows
 The good old Roman graft that in Ferrara rose.

LXXX.

There with this Estéan branch the Guelphic tree
Engraft, revives, as it was waxing old;
Now in its scions you the Guelphs might see
Renew their sceptres, stars, and crowns of gold,
Brighter than ever; whilst each orb that rolled
In heaven, its fairest rays and aspects shed;
So that it flourished still, and, uncontrolled,
Towered till the heavens themselves confined its head,
Which half the spacious land with fruit and shade o'erspread.

LXXXI.

Nor less luxuriantly the royal stem
Flowered in the' Italian boughs; Bertoldo here
Shot forth, confronting Guelpho, and with them
Azzo the Sixth renewed the glories clear
Of his great sires:—thus animate appear
Upon the breathing shield, in long array,
These forms, to Fame and to Rinaldo dear;
A thousand sparks of pride that fond survey
Struck forth, that in the wreck of honour latent lay.

LXXXII.

And, for the like divine renown ablaze,
Their gallant actions so transport his brain,
That he already in his mind portrays
The city conquered, and the people slain;
All seems presented, palpably and plain,
Before him,—the stormed towers, the rending walls;
He snatches up the arms in ardent vein,
And, almost fancying that the trumpet calls,
With wing'd aspiring hopes the victory far forestalls.

LXXXIII.

Then Charles, who had related long before
The Danish Prince's death, with frank address
The sword presented which Prince Sweno wore,—
"Take it," he said, "and with it good success!
With just and pious sentiments, no less
Than a brave hand employ it, sound and strong,
In Christ's good cause; may he thine efforts bless!
And thou avenge its former master's wrong,
Who waits it at thy hands, who loved thy virtues long!"

LXXXIV.

"God grant," the knight replied, "for his dear sake,
Since of his sword thus happily possessed,
That I indeed may full requital take,
And duly thus fulfil his last request!"
Charles, overjoyed, in brief his thanks expressed,
And added tributes of affection paid;
But here the Sage, with the desire impressed
To expedite their course, stepped in, and prayed
That their return might now no longer be delayed.

LXXXV.

"High time it is," he said, "that you prepare
To reach the army; you will not arrive
Unlooked-for,—come then, through the dusky air
Trust to my guidance, safely will I drive."
He said: his words their eagerness revive;
They climb the car, and take their seats; this done,
He cheers his coursers to the lash, which strive,
Curving their necks, each other to outrun,
And shapes their rapid course to meet the morning sun.

LXXXVI.

Through the brown darkness of the night serene
Thus they rode on, with deep reflection mute;
When the Sage spoke: "Thou of thy race hast seen
The various boughs, and traced them to their root;
Yet fancy not, because that ancient shoot
Has thriven so fully in its morn of May,
The fruitful mother of heroic fruit,
That through old age it ever will decay,
And want or fruit or flower, to grace a verdant spray.

LXXXVII.

"O that, as I thy elder sires have drawn
Forth from the Gothic gloom of antique night,
I could the figures of thy sons unborn
Paint on the shield, with hues as clear and bright!
That, ere they ope their eyelids to the light,
I could their triumphs to the world resound!
Then shouldst thou see, with all a sire's delight,
A host of future heroes crowd around,
Their series no less long, their deeds no less renowned.

LXXXVIII.

"But my skill serves not of itself to mark
A ray of truth from out the future shine,
Other than dim and dubious, as the spark
Of a far taper in a misty mine :
Yet, if some tidings of thy future line
In certainty I give, without disguise,
Call it not bold ; for what I thus divine,
Is learned from One before whose vision lies,
Clear and unveiled, the scenes and secrets of the skies.

LXXXIX.

"What God's pure light to him, and he to me
Has shewn, as freely I to thee relate ;
Nor Gentile, Greek, or Latin progeny,
Or in these times, or those of elder date,
E'er teemed with heroes of such noble state
As Heaven, in its high favour, does foredoom
To thee and thine ; nor may the good and great
In Sparta, Carthage, Macedon, or Rome,
To match their glorious fame or majesty presume.

XC.

"But far o'er others shall Alphonso shine,
In title second, but the first in worth ;
When for illustrious men the world shall pine,
Old and corrupted, shall this prince have birth :
None, in those days of darkness and of dearth,
Shall better sway the sword or sceptre bright ;
None with his wisdom so enlighten earth,
Charm in the Court, or fulmine in the fight ;
Thy seed's ascendant pride, his age's guiding light !

XCI.

"Whilst yet a youth, he shall give pregnant signs
Of manhood,—prince in each gymnastic play ;
Scourge of wild beasts mid mountain peaks and pines ;
Graced, at all solemn tilts and tourneys gay,
With the first shouts and favours of the day ;
And when to actual warfare he shall pass,
Rich spoils and palms victorious bear away ;
And for brave deeds, writ down in breathing brass,
Wear many a votive crown of laurel, oak, and grass.

XCII.

"The equal glory of his riper age
Shall be to stablish peace and calm repose;
To keep his cities tranquil, from the rage
And powerful influence of surrounding foes;
To foster genius, ignorance to depose,
The arts encourage, his fond Court present
With joyous pageants, plays, and splendid shews;
Deal with just hand reward and punishment,
Evils uncome foresee, and seen, with ease prevent.

XCIII.

"And O, if e'er against the race whose crimes
The' infested seas and ravaged shores pollute,—
Tyrants that force in those unhappy times
Illumined nations humbly to make suit
To them for peace,—he march to execute
Justice for fanes down-tumbled, treasure wrecked,
And violated shrines, in that dispute
What heavy vengeance may they not expect
On the barbarian king and his accursed sect!

XCIV.

"In vain the Turk against his marshalled ranks,
In vain the Moor might muster band on band;
For far beyond Euphrates' willowed banks,
The snows of Taurus, and the happy land
Where dwells perpetual sunshine, would his hand
Advance the Golden Lilies, loose the wing
Of the White Eagle, the furled Cross expand,
And, by due baptism of each Negro king,
Compel imperial Nile to shew his secret spring!"

XCV.

Thus spoke the Senior; the rapt youth took heed
Of all he uttered, and with transport fed
On the fair promise of his future seed,
Which o'er his mind a sweet serenity shed.
Meanwhile before the break of morn fast fled
The twilight hours; Aurora, dropping dew,
Advanced, and touched the heavens with rosy red;
And now the trembling of the flags that flew
On the high tents far-off, distinctly met their view.

XCVI.

Then thus again the Sage : "These shadows brown
See how the sun disperses ! and displays
The tents, the plain, the mountains and the town,
With the kind comment of his grateful rays !
O'er unknown tracks, by unobstructed ways,
Safe, without danger or delay, nor slow,
Here have I brought you ; you yourselves may trace
Your onward way, nor fear a single foe ;
Thus then we part ; farewell ! no farther must I go."

XCVII.

Embracing, they depart ; and straight pursue
On foot their journey with the crimson cloud
That, floating eastward, a rich radiance threw
On tent, and silent crag, and rampart proud.
Fame flew before them, and divulged aloud
The Barons' wished arrival ; wide and fleet
The news was borne amidst the cheering crowd ;
Godfrey, thus advertised, his ducal seat
Left, and with stately step went forth the youth to meet.

END OF CANTO XVII.



JERUSALEM DELIVERED.

CANTO XVIII.





Stanza xxx.

ARGUMENT.

His errors first the good Rinaldo mourns,
 Then seeks the' enchanted wood,—the spirits fly
 Before him; Godfrey by a courier learns
 Of the Egyptian host, which now draws nigh,
 Important tidings; yet the dexterous spy,
 •Vafrino, goes to' inspect it: sharp the fight
 Waxes round Sion, but the hierarchy
 Of Heaven so aids the flushed Crusaders' might,
 That soon their banners float on each bombarded height.

JERUSALEM DELIVERED.

CANTO XVIII.

I.

ARRIVED where Godfrey to salute him stood,
Rinaldo spoke: "Revengeful discontent
And jealous honour spurred me to my feud
With dead Gernando, which I much repent;
And 't is with sorrow still for that event
And thy displeasure that I seek thy face;
Now at the instance of thine envoys sent
For my recall, I come, the stain to' efface
By whatsoe'er good deeds may win me back thy grace."

II.

Low as he kneeled before him Godfrey cast
His arms around his neck, and kindly said;
"No more revive the melancholy past;
In peace repose the memory of the dead!
And no amends I seek for frenzy fled,
Than that thy wonted valour be renewed,—
That, for the ruin of the foe, thou tread
Enchanted ground, and, for the general good,
From spells and monsters free the' inviolable wood."

III.

"That immemorial forest whence of late
We drew our timbers, is defended now,
I know not from what cause, by charms innate,
Deep, strong, and dreadful to the boldest brow;
Nor is there one that dares disturb a bough,
Much less a single sapling of the grove
Touch with the axe; yet without engines, how
Can we the city take? yea! risks which move
To fear out stoutest hearts, will now thy courage prove."

IV.

The youth accepts the risk and toil, without
Much protestation, but with an address
So full of dignity, that none can doubt
From his laconic speech his sure success.
Then to his other noble friends that press
Affectionately near him, he bestows
His courteous hand ; and now with cheerfulness
Embraces Guelpho, Tancred now, and throws
Kind nods to all the chiefs that round his person close.

V.

When many a welcome, many a dear embrace
He to the sovereign princes had bestowed,
With like familiar love and gentle grace
He took the greetings of the inferior crowd :
With martial shouts these testified aloud
Their joy, and thronged as thickly to his side,
As if, by elephants or leopards proud
Drawn in high triumph, he had tamed the pride
Of all the realms through which the Nile and Ganges glide.

VI.

Thus hailed, to his pavilion he retires,
And entertains his dearest friends around ;
And much to them replies, and much inquires
Both of the war and of the charmed ground.
But when, all leaving him, the Hermit found
Leisure for serious talk, he spoke, and said ;
“ Great things are those, young Voyager renowned,
Which to thy pilgrim eyes have been displayed,
And long the wondrous tract o’er which thy steps have strayed !

VII.

“ How great thy debt to the Celestial King,
Who thus redeems thee from the charmer’s den !
Nor spares, with all a shepherd’s love, to bring
Back the lost lamb into his holy pen ;
That now, by Godfrey’s voice, he makes again
Thee second agent in his high design !
Yet art thou changed ; not pure of heart, as when
Thou last waged war, and, lain so long supine,
Thou mayst not yet engage in service so divine.

VIII.

"Darkness, the world, the flesh, spiritual sin
With such infectious stains thy soul defile,
No earthly spring can wash thy conscience clean,
The streams of Ganges, or the floods of Nile.
The secret source of what in thee is vile
Heaven's grace alone can fitly purge away;
Turn to thy Saviour then, in lowly style
Ask for forgiveness, all thy sins display,
Cling to the Cross in faith, weep, tremble, praise, and pray."

IX.

He said; and first the youth bewailed his fall,
His amorous follies, and fierce wrath; then kneeled
Contritely at the Hermit's feet, and all
His youthful crimes and levities revealed.
This done, the minister of Heaven repealed
His sins, and absolution gave; then said,—
"Seek now, by prayer to have thy pardon sealed,
When next the morning o'er the world is spread,
The hill that on the East rears high its reverend head."

X.

"Then to the haunted Forest march, where dwell
Such frightful phantoms and gigantic things;
Thou wilt, I know, those fiends and furies quell,
If no fresh error thy tuned soul unstrings.
Let no strange voice that mourns, or sweetly sings,
No smile of ruby lips or radiant eyes
Steal to thy heart and touch fond pity's springs
With their bewitching beauty, but despise
All their fond aspects feigned, false tears, and fancied cries."

XI.

Thus the Sage counsels, and the ardent knight
Prepares with hope for the sublime emprise;
Thoughtful he spends the day, and sad the night,
And ere the breaking morn begins to rise,
Girds on his beautiful bright arms; applies
The falchion to his side, and o'er his mail
Throws a new mantle pranked with rarest dyes;
Leaves the warm friends that, as he passes, veil
Their plumes, and all alone treads slow the silent dale.

XII.

It was the hour when, grieving to be gone,
Night on the confines of the day still slept;
The East grew rosy with the flame of morn,
Yet still some stars her radiant portal kept.
When, as to Olivet the sword he swept,
And as his serious eyes, to heaven inclined,
Marked, with the spangling tears which Night had wept,
The incorruptible pure lights that shined
On high,—to solemn thoughts he gave his musing mind.

XIII.

“O,” to himself he thought, “how many bright
And glorious fires heaven’s vaulted temple fret!
Day has his car, her golden stars the Night,
And the round silver moon, more radiant yet.
But we, nor these nor those revering, set
On the pale meteors which a flashing eye,
A brilliant smile, or glowing canzonet,
Strike from the twilight of our transient sky,
Our inconsiderate hearts,—gaze, grieve, admire, and die!”

XIV.

And musing thus, awed, melted, and abased,
He reached the summit clothed with mountain thyme;
Above the heaven of heavens his thoughts were raised,
And thus, his face turned to the Orient clime,
Kneeling, he prayed; “The errors of my prime,
O holy Father! in thy mercy, view
With the mild eye of clemency; sublime
My low desires; the evil seed subdue;
And in my soul be pleased thine image to renew!”

XV.

Thus as he prayed, with blushing roses crowned
The radiant Morn appears; which with its sheen
His helm, his arms, and all the mountain round
At once illumed, and golden turned the green.
Fresh on his bosom and bent brow serene,
He felt the spirit of that peaceful hour,
Fanned with its wing; whilst o’er his head unseen,
Shook from Aurora’s lap, distilled a shower
Of dew more pure than e’er bespangled blade or bower.

XVI.

The dew celestial on his garments fell,
Which shewed as ashes to a tint so bright;
Illumined so, they look no longer pale,
But change their colour to a shining white.
So the scorched summer flowers, at morning light
Steeped in fresh dews, their withered bells unfold,
With added beauty; so, to the delight
Of a new youth returned, after long cold,
The joyful anake shines out, new flourished o'er with gold.

XVII.

The lively whiteness of his altered vest,
Seen by himself, he ceased not to admire;
Then to the old gray forest swift he pressed,
With a firm boldness and sublime desire.
He reached that bosky wilderness of brier
And bough, the sight alone whereof dismayed,
And forced less valiant champions to retire;
Yet saw he nothing in the wood, that made
So much a frightful gloom, as a delightful shade.

XVIII.

He passes onward — the charm works; a sound
Sweet as the air of Paradise upsprings;
Hoarse roars the shallow brook; the leaves around,
Sigh to the fluttering of the light wind's wings;
Her ravishing sweet dirge the cygnet sings,
Loud mourn the answering nightingales; sad shells,
Flutes, human voices tuned to golden strings,
And the loud surging organ's glorious swells,—
Such and so various sounds one single sound expels.

XIX.

He was expecting, like the rest, to meet
The strange wild groans and thunders of dismay,
And lo, a symphony of sirens sweet,
Birds, winds, and waters, for his pleasure play!
Wondering he checks his steps,—they melt away,
And on he walks, but circumspect and slow;
And nought occurs to interrupt his way,
But a transparent flood, whose waters go
Through the green wood, serene, and silent in their flow.

XX.

Flowers and choice odours richly smiled and smelled,
On either side of the calm stream, which wound
In a so spacious circle, that it held
The whole vast forest in its charming round;
Nor only with green bowers and garlands crowned
The compass in its keep,—a streamlet strayed
Through this sweet isle, enlivening all the ground;
A most delightful interchange they made;
The mild wave bathes the woods, the woods the wave
o'ershade.

XXI.

Whilst he roved round to find a ford, behold,
A wondrous passage to his wish appeared!
An exquisite rich bridge of shining gold
Spanned the pure waves, on stable arches reared;
The golden bridge he passed, the water cleared,
But had no sooner touched the farther shore,
Than the whole glorious fabric disappeared;
And the sweet river, so serene before,
To a vast torrent swelled, that stunned him with its roar.

XXII.

He turns his face, and sees it swoln and spread,
Like a strong flood increased by melting snows;
And, whirling round as to its fountain head,
A thousand rapid curls and gulfs it shews;
But, curious of new objects, on he goes
Through the brown arches thick of aged trees,
That now on every side his steps enclose;
And in these savage glooms, to strike or please,
At every strange new turn, some strange new wonder sees.

XXIII.

Where'er he plants his foot some charm springs out,
The wild brook warbles, or the sweet turf flowers;
There lilies open, here young roses sprout,
There the shrill fountain falls in silver showers;
And round, o'erhead, the austere and aged bowers
Renew their youth,—the hoary bark is seen
To soften, the moss falls, the grey trunk towers,
Each bough its buds, each leaf renews its green,—
Mild shines the summer sun, and decks the enchanted scene.

XXIV.

Impearled with manna was each fresh leaf nigh;
Honey and golden gums the rude trunks weep;
Again is heard that strange wild harmony
Of songs and sorrows, plaintive, mild, and deep;
But the sweet choirs that still such tenor keep
With the swans, winds and waves, no ear can trace
To their concealed abode in shade or steep;
Nor harp, nor horn, nor form of human face,
Look where he would, was seen in all the shady place.

XXV.

Whilst his eye wanders, and his mind denies
Trust to the truths his charm'd ear recommends,
He sees far-off a wondrous myrtle rise,
Where in a spacious plain the pathway ends;
To this he walks; its boughs the plant extends
Wide as the choice tree of Dodonian Jove,—
O'er pine, and palm, and cypress it ascends;
And, towering thus all other trees above,
Looks like the' elected queen and genius of the grove.

XXVI.

Scarce had the hero reached the spacious field
Than stranger novelties his eye arrest;
He sees an oak, self-aided, cleave, and yield
Spontaneous offspring from its fruitful breast:
A full-grown nymph, in gown and turban drest,
On whose ripe cheek celestial beauty blooms,
O wonder! issues from that hoary chest;
A hundred other girls from sylvan wombs
A hundred others child, amidst the circling glooms.

XXVII.

As the stage shews, or as we painted see
The sylvan Goddess, with her white arms bare,
With hunting weeds tucked up above the knee,
Buskins of blue, and loose luxuriant hair,—
Just such, to all appearance, are the fair
Fictitious daughters of these wild-woods old;
Save, that for horns, to wake some sprightlier air,
Quivers, and bended bows, they in their hold
Have viols, lutes, and harps, of ivory, pearl, and gold.

XXVIII.

Ranging themselves into a ring, their hands
 They knit together, and with joyous cheer
 Dance round about Rinaldo as he stands
 The willing centre of this moving sphere :
 The tree they compass too, and carol clear,
 As in light morrice to the charm they move ;
 " Welcome, thrice welcome, gallant chevalier !"
 They sing, " our Lady's hope, our Lady's love ;
 In blessed hour all hail to this delightful grove !

XXIX.

" Timely thou com'st to cure her, wounded sore
 With amorous thoughts and languishing desires ;
 These groves, so dark and desolate before,
 Her grief's fit dwelling, choked with thorns and briers,
 Lo, at thy coming what quick joy inspires
 Each tree and leafy bough ! how redolent
 They breathe, dressed freshly in their green attires !"
 Such was the song, and from the myrtle went
 First a melodious sound, and then the sylvan rent.

XXX.

A rude Silenus oft the days of old
 Have seen unclothe, and yield some Goddess fair,¹⁷
 But never yet did sylvan image hold
 Charms such as issued from the myrtle rare :
 For forth a Lady stept with golden hair,
 With angel beauty, angel mien and grace ;
 In whom, albeit of visionary air,
 Rinaldo starts Armida's form to trace,
 The same expressive eye, fond smile, and radiant face.

XXXI.

Sorrow and joy into her looks she cast,
 A thousand passions, which one glance betrays ;
 " And art thou then indeed returned at last
 To thy forsaken love," she pensive says ;
 " Why com'st thou hither, my belov'd ? to raise
 My drooping soul, and with remembered charms
 Solace my widowed nights and lonely days ?
 Or to wage war, and scare me with alarms ?
 Why hide thy lovely face ? why shew these threatening arms ?

XXXII.

"Com'st thou a foe or friend? I did not rear
That glorious bridge to entertain my foe ;
Unlocked not brooks, flowers, fountains, made not clear
For him that wilderness of brambles—no !
Take now, take off this horrid helmet, shew
Thy face for friendly, glad me with the shine
Of those celestial eyes ; say, why so slow ?
Kiss me, embrace me, oh my love ! I pine ;
Or press at least once more my cold, cold hand in thine."

XXXIII.

Thus as she woos, her beautiful bright eyes
Rueful she rolls, and pale as death appears ;
Feigning, with every tear, the sweetest sighs,
And melancholy moans, and bashful fears.
It might have moved a heart of stone to tears,
To hear how fondly she herself deplored ;
But he, unmoved by all he sees and hears,
Cautious, not cruel, to the plaints she poured
No longer pays regard, but draws his fatal sword.

XXXIV.

The myrtle he approached ; but she with fright
The dear trunk clasping, interposed, and cried ;
"Mercy, ah mercy ! do me not such spite,
As to cut down my myrtle-tree, the pride
And last poor solace of forlorn Armide ;
Put up thy sword, O consort most unkind !
Or sheathe it, cruel, in thy lady's side ;
For through this only it shall passage find,
To strike my lovely tree and hurt its hallowed rind !"

XXXV.

Deaf to her prayers, he rears his sword, and she
Transforms herself as swift ; as when at night
Our dreams, ne'er constant to the thing we see,
Shift the fond object we had first in sight ;
Gross grew her members, dark her face, upright
Her horrent hair ; gone by are all her charms,
White breast, and rosy cheek,—enlarged in height,
A giantess, she glows with feigned alarms,
Like fell Briareus, limbed with full one hundred arms.

XXXVI.

With fifty swords she fought; on fifty shields
She clashed defiance, blustered, roared, and brayed;
Each other nymph the like weird weapons wield,
A frowning Cyclop, a gigantic Shade!
He feared them not, but with his waving blade
On the charmed myrtle multiplied his blows,
Which at each stroke distressful moanings made;
Air seemed a hell in hubbub, awful shows
Thronged the black sky, and ghosts in swarms on swarms
arose.

XXXVII.

Thundered the flashing heavens above, the ground
Groaned underneath,—that bellowed, and this shook;
While the loosed winds and tempests blustering round,
Blew the sharp sleet and hailstones in his look;
Yet not for this the knight his post forsook,
His aim he missed not, changed not in his cheer,
But the more fiercely for their fury strook;—
'T is done! the myrtle falls; the' enchantments drear
Flit with the ended spell; the phantoms disappear.

XXXVIII.

Air still, the heavens serene, the woods resume
Their wonted quiet and sequestered state;
Not terrible, nor cheerful, full of gloom
From palm and cypress, but a gloom innate.
The Victor tries again if as of late
Aught yet forbade the felling of the trees,
And finding nothing check his sword, sedate
Smiles and says inly; "O vain semblances!
O fools, to be deterred by shadows false as these!"

XXXIX.

Then to the Camp he turns; meanwhile aware
Of these events, the solitary Seer
Exclaimed; "The charm is o'er, the forest fair
Of evil spirits, and the victor near;
See where he comes!" and now distinguished clear
In his pure mantle from afar, the knight
Struck the spectators with a holy fear;
For the spread pinions of his eagle white
In the clear sunshine shone with unaccustomed light.

XL.

With glad huzzas for victory achieved
Rang the wide hills around, and skies above ;
The conquering knight by Godfrey is received
With praise unmixed by envy, and with love.
“Sire,” said Rinaldo, “to the dreadful grove,
As you desired, I went; the sprites impure
I saw—I saw and conquered them; improve
The’ occasion then, the ways are quite secure,
Send then the workmen forth, the timbers to procure.”

XLI.

Straight to the aged woods they went, and hewed
What Art thought proper for the task in hand ;
The first artificers in skill were rude,
And little did machinery understand :
But now a noble mechanician planned
The important works, selected well the trees,
And every movement of the workmen scanned,—
William—who lately with his Genoese
Roved the Levantine waves, sole Signior of the seas.

XLII.

But, forced before the’ Egyptian fleet at length
His azure kingdom of the sea to quit,
He to the Camp transferred his naval strength;—
To frame such works was never man more fit ;
For an ingenious brain, a fruitful wit,
Industrious hand and scientific mind,
To him almost might Dædalus submit ;
A hundred meaner architects combined
To execute the schemes his genius now designed.

XLIII.

He undertook to build, not vines alone,
Balistæ, rams, and catapults, of power
To batter down defended walls of stone,
And on high bulwarks rain an arrowy shower,
But, planked with pine and fir, a wondrous tower,
The masterpiece of art; and, to provide
Against the’ adhesive flames that might devour
The timbers else, he lined it well outside
With fire-proof skins of sheep and quilts of tough bull-hide.

XLIV.

The separate beams and timbers, mortised tight,
Are joined, completed is the pile; below,
Swings the vast ram, which with its horned might
Threats at each stroke the city to o'erthrow;
Its waist lets down a bridge, which falling slow,
Worked by a windlass, joins the' opposing wall,
And forms an instant passage to the foe;
Whilst from the top a second tower less tall,
Inly concealed, at need shoots up o'ergazing all.

XLV.

With little cost of toil the' enormous mass
Upon its hundred wheels volubil rolled,
Though bearing, armed in brigandine of brass,
A little army in its spacious hold;
Round stood the soldiers, marvelling to behold
With what consummate ease the workmen plied
Their several tasks; much they their skill extolled,
Much the vast engine; two more towers beside,
Planned like the first, were built, ere yet the daylight died.

XLVI.

But neither were their works nor their designs
From the mewed Pagans meanwhile wholly hid;
For on the wall that to the Camp inclines,
Keen spies were placed, to notice all they did:
These, though the distance insight clear forbid,
Saw what vast loads of cypress, pine and yew,
Were from the sable forest drawn amid
The tents; they marked the rising engines too,
But of their shape and plan no clear conception drew.

XLVII.

They too frame engines, and with equal art
The towers and bulwarks fortify again,
And raise so high the fortress on the part
Last stormed, the brunt of battle to sustain,
That now, as fondly they suppose, no train
Of circumstance, or force of arms will e'er
Avail, the' assaulted city to obtain;
Whilst dark Ismeno studies to prepare
Beyond all else, fresh fires, unusual, strange, and rare.

XLVIII.

With sulphur did the curst Magician mix
Bitumen, from the lake of Sodom brought,
Brimstone, received, it strikes me, from the Styx,
And fiery spume, in hell by demons wrought;
And thus composed a cruel fire, so fraught
With smoke and stench, that, darted in the face,
Whom once it strikes it stifles; well, he thought,
By these revenging fireballs to efface,
For the enchanted wood cut down, his late disgrace.

XLIX.

Whilst thus to win or to defend the wall
Both hosts their engines frame, a turtle dove
In the blue firmament is seen of all
To pass, the Christian multitude above:
With outspread wings this liquid air she clove,
And went away as lightly as the wind;
This wandering, mute communicant of love,
So soon as she had left the camp behind,
Down from the lofty clouds to' accost the town inclined.

L.

When lo! they knew not whence, a falcon armed
With hooked beak and talons, sailed in sight;
Which, 'twixt the city and the camp, alarmed
The' opposed mild bird in her descending flight;
She waited not his truss; but, full of fright,
On instant wing to the pavilions fled,
And at the moment when the cruel kite,
Down stooping swift, just touched her tender head,
In Godfrey's bosom fell, betwixt alive and dead.

LI.

Godfrey the bird protected, and espied,
As he her plumage smoothed, a curious thing;
For from the neck, by flax of Egypt tied,
A letter hung, concealed beneath her wing.
Marvelling to see it, he untwines the string,
And breaks the seal; then well he comprehends
The purpose of the scroll: "To Judah's king,"
Thus spoke the' inscription, "to his first of friends,
Health, honour, joy, and peace the' Egyptian Caliph sends!

LII.

" Fear not, my noble lord ! resist, endure,
Till the fourth day, or till the fifth at most ;
For by that period thou shalt see, besure,
My slaughtering sword devour the hostile host."
Such was the secret in the note enclosed,
In Syriac ciphers writ, and sealed with care,
Given in commission to this flying post ;
For in the East these couriers of the air,
Trained to the trusty charge, were then by no means rare.

LIII.

The bird he freed ; she, cooing her concern
That her lord's secrets had been thus betrayed,
Durst not, though innocent of ill, return
A rebel back, but fled far thence afraid.
Godfrey the intercepted scroll displayed
Before the lords and princes that compose
His military Council ; " See," he said,
" How well the goodness of our God foreshews
To us the close designs and secrets of our foes !

LIV.

" We must no longer now protract the time,
But clear away fresh outworks ; we must spare
No sweat, no labour, no fatigue to climb
The South-West walls ; 't is true, the crags are there
Steep, sharp, and high, nor apt, I am aware,
For the approach of arms and engines ; still
It may be done : I have surveyed with care
The coast, and find that, strengthened by the hill,
Those towers have been defenced with little cost of skill.

LV.

" Thou, Raymond, with thy men the crags ascend,
And storm those walls, whilst I with all the state
And pomp preparative of battle, bend
My horned rams against the Northern gate ;
So that the foe, beguiled to ' anticipate
In arms our principal bombardment there,
May leave me free hereafter to translate
My tower that slides so easily, to bear
Ruin, and dread, and death, and victory elsewhere.

LVI.

" At the same time, Camillo, thou close by,
Or not far-off, the third tower must dispose :"
He said, and good Count Raymond who sate nigh,
And as he spoke weighed well each accent, rose
And said ; " This counsel no one can oppose,
"T is given in perfect wisdom, the event
Will surely prove it such ; I would propose
Alone that some one midst our foes be sent,
Into their plans to pry, and creep from tent to tent ;--

LVII.

" Number their troops, and with instinctive wit
Fathom their thoughts, as far as in him lies :"
Said Tancred then, " I have a Squire most fit
For the exploit, the very prince of spies ;
Quick, subtle, dexterous, he has Argus eyes
For such concerns ; shrewd, supple, light of toe ;
Bold too, but in his boldness close and wise ;
And many tongues he talks, and varies so
His gesture, voice, and gait, that none the man can know."

LVIII.

Sent for, he came ; and soon as he had heard
Duke Godfrey's pleasure and his lord's, was won
To their desire ; he, smiling, with a word
The task embraced, and said, " My Lords, I 'm gone ;
Into their unsuspecting camp anon
Enter I will, and pay implicit heed
To all their motions, recognised by none ;
E'en at midnight through all the host proceed,
And number every man, and number every steed.

LIX.

" Their hosts, their squadrons, and the arms they bring
I pledge myself to notice ; nay, I vow
The closest thoughts and counsels of the king
To win adroitly from him,—ask not how."
Thus with bold air Vafrino spoke ; and now
Stayed but to bare his graceful neck, to wind
Long rolls of linen round his manly brow,
Change for a mantle his juppón, and bind
Round his broad waist a belt, a quiver hang behind.

LX.

And thus accoutred, in his dexter hand
A Syrian bow, with gestures nothing meek,
He seems a pure barbarian, and all stand
In absolute amaze to hear him speak
Such various tongues, so that in Greece a Greek,
In Tyre a true Phœnician, in the waste
Of marbled Tadmor an Arabian sheik
All would have thought him; off he rides in haste,
On a swift steed that scarce disturbed the sands it paced.

LXI.

But ere the third day shone, the Franks had strained
Each nerve to smoothe the rough uneven ways,
Finished their engines, and in fact maintained
One ceaseless vigil of fatigue; the days
Alone sufficed them not; but by the blaze
Of piny torches did they task the night
With toil, disdaining sleep: to Godfrey's gaze,
All was now ready with the morning light
To prove the last extremes and fortunes of the fight.

LXII.

The Chief great part of the preceding day
Had spent in prayer, and had employed the priest
To shrive the army of their sins, that they
Might share with him the sacramental feast.
Then to the parts where he intended least
To stand the brunt of battle, he applied
His rams and mighty engines, which increased
The blinded Pagans' transport, hope and pride,
Seeing them face the gate most strongly fortified.

LXIII.

But when the night had spread her raven pall,
The huge light tower he spirited away,
To where less strong and crooked shewed the wall,
And jutting angles less forbade the play
Of the strong ram; his armed tower ere day
Raymond too planting on the hill's tall crest,
Took the whole city in his broad survey;
Whilst his Camillo to that point addressed,
Where from the north the wall wheels round to front the west.

LXIV.

When now the roseate messenger of morn
Had tipt the eastern hills and towers with light,
The Pagans stared to see the tower withdrawn
Far from the spot where it stood overnight,
And seeing trembled ; to the left and right
New structures also, manned and managed well,
Till now unnoticed, burst upon their sight,
With countless fresh machines,—balistæ fell,
Cat, scorpion, crossbow, ram, war-wolf, and mangonel.

LXV.

The Syrian people, though depressed at heart
By this deception, were by no means slack
Thither to move their engines from the part
Where first Duke Godfrey menaced the attack ;
But he meanwhile, aware that at his back
The' Egyptian army marched, thus gave command
To Guelph and the two Roberts ; " On the track
That leads to Gaza, station each a band
Of horse, and toward the south watch well, with sword in
hand.

LXVI.

" And have regard, that whilst I storm the part
Where the grey battlements most weak appear,
No sudden squadron, with insidious art,
Bring round the rage of battle to my rear."
He said ; three times the trumpet tubes blew drear ;
To the three sounds, three valiant nations made
On three sides horrible assault severe,—
'Gainst each of which, the king in brave parade
Of arms long laid aside, his hostile powers arrayed.

LXVII.

Cased in old arms, and with the weight of age,
Not fear of danger trembling, forth he goes,
Long lost to war, Count Raymond to engage,
The most sagacious of his numerous foes :
The Soldan strides Duke Godfrey to oppose,
Argantes good Camillo, at whose side
Stands Bohemond's brave nephew ; fortune chose,
Or rather Providence, the Prince to guide
Thus to the destined foe whose blood his falchion dyed.

LXVIII.

Straight the strong archers from their bows let fly
Ten thousand mortal barbs with poisonous stings ;
That underneath a cloud of shafts, the sky
Grows dark, as though beneath the night's black wings.
But blows of more tremendous force from slings
And huge balistæ come, with ruder shocks ;
For thence fly, every time the huge ram swings,
Stones, rugged masses of uprooted rocks,
Trees shod with pointed steel, lead, marble, logs, and blocks.

LXIX.

Each stone a thunderbolt appears, and so
Where it alights, the arms and members breaks,
Not life alone and spirit from the blow,
But form and feature e'en the man forsakes ;
The long lance stays not in the wound it makes,
But onward still, still on long after hies ;
Piercing the warrior's coat of mail, it takes
Its course right through him, as he fights or flies ;
He feels the piercing point, and as it passes, dies.

LXX.

Yet cannot all this force and fury drive
The desperate Pagans to forsake the wall ;
Still to their arms resolved they stand, and strive
Or to revenge each charge, or to forestall !
Against the strokes of the strong ram, they call
For bales of pliant wool, which from on high
They hang, and deaden thus the blows that fall ;
And where the Franks shew most exposed and nigh,
With thousand thousand shafts give back a proud reply.

LXXI.

Yet still the Franks, arranged in closest file,
Move on three sides the ramparts to assail,
And underneath the cat and tortoise, smile
To hear the sounding storm of arrowy hail.
To the high walls, despite the men in mail
That line their battlements, the towers are led,
And strive to launch, albeit at first they fail,
Their light pontoons ; whilst, worked beneath its shed,
Buts the bombarding ram with adamantine head.

LXXII.

Irresolute meanwhile Rinaldo stands,
This risk and that were far too poor a praise;
And 'twould be base in him with armed bands
To bear his flag by plain and beaten ways;
Debating thus, he casts around his gaze,—
That path alone at which all else would halt,
It pleases him to move in; he surveys
The loftiest walls their battlements exalt,
Warred on by none,—'t is there he will begin the' assault.

LXXIII.

And turning to the troop—famed heroes all—
Whom Dudon lately led, he made exclaim;
“What, my compeers! shall then this old grey wall
In the grand wrack repose in peace? O shame
To generous knighthood, chivalry, and fame!
Each hazard to the Brave assurance yields,
And all steep paths are plain to those who aim
At praise,—come on then; quick! join shield to shield,
And to their cruel shafts a stubborn tortoise build.

LXXIV.

Swift at the word all join with him, all cast
Their targets o'er their heads in brave disdain;
And, man thus wedged with man, compacted fast,
Form a tight penthouse that defies the rain
Of stones and arrows, under which amain
They speed the rapid march no rage can stay;
For well the iron tortoise does sustain
All the huge weights that with tempestuous sway
From the thronged walls descend, to bar their onward way.

LXXV.

The walls are reached; and now Rinaldo rears
Aloft a scaling ladder with a flight
Of full two hundred steps, which he appears
To move and manage with an ease as light,
As winds the willow; from the ramparts' height
Now rocks, now spears, now beams down thundering go;
Yet upward still ascends the dauntless knight,
By each rebuff unscared, unmoved, although
They should Olympus down, or piny Ossa throw.

LXXVI.

A wood of arrows on his shield alights,
A very mount of fragments, steel and stone,
On his strong back ; one arm the bulwark smites,
And one the guardian target o'er the cone
Of his bright helm suspends ; the courage shewn
By him excites his brave compeers no less
To deeds of daring ; he mounts not alone ;
Numbers beside with ladders forward press,
And climb, with various turns of valour and success.

LXXVII.

One dies—another falls—he mounts sublime,
These his praise cheers, and those his threats alarm ;
And to a height so lofty does he climb,
That now he grasps with his extended arm
The topmost battlements ; vast numbers swarm
Round the young knight with dagger, axe, and brand,
To smite and hurl him down ; but him no harm
Repels,—O wonderful ! a single hand,
Hung in mid air, has power armed thousands to withstand.

LXXVIII.

Not only he withstands, but livelier grows,
And like the palm-tree when by weights oppressed,
More strong and valiant from resistance shews,
His pulse beats brisker, loftier shoots his crest.
Some of his foes he slew, dispersed the rest,
The spars and stones that on his buckler weighed
Shook off, leaped o'er the battlements, possessed
The walls he wished, and with his ruling blade
Safe for his following friends the obstructed passage made :

LXXIX.

And to the youngest brother of the brave
And virtuous Godfrey, just about to fall,
His kind victorious hand Rinaldo gave,
And helped him second so to scale the wall.
Godfrey meanwhile, whom nothing could appal,
In other quarters various fortunes proved,
Nor were the perils he encountered small ;
For there not knight alone with knight approved
His strength, but tower 'gainst tower, 'gainst engine engine
moved.

LXXX.

And there the Syrians had upreared a pine
That once had served some admiral for a mast,
And hung thereto, by many a twisted line
To a huge transverse beam on high made fast,
A long steel-headed ram, stout, rude and vast,
Which backward drawn by cords, tempestuous fell,
And shattered all at which its front was cast;
By turns the beam they pull, by turns propel,
As the snail now shrinks in, now creeps from forth its shell.

LXXXI.

Beats the huge beam, and on the tower so sore
Doubles its loud percussions, as to smite
Some paces back the pile, with all it bore,
And many a mortised rafter disunite:
The tower, for every exigence of fight
Prepared, brooked not the sounding insult long,
But from within, till now concealed from sight,
Launched out two scythes, large, crooked, sharp and strong,
And cut the cords on which the enormous engine swung.

LXXXII.

As a huge rock, which age or stormy winds
Uproot or loosen from some mountain steep,
Rolls headlong down, and into thin dust grinds
Woods, houses, hamlets, herds and flocks of sheep;
So fell the frightful beam with giant leap,
Hideous, enormous, bearing to the ground
Arms, men and turrets in its stormy sweep:
Shake the firm ramparts; rocks the tower; and round,
The hills and hollow glens rebellow back the sound.

LXXXIII.

All sanguine now to win the wall advanced
The conquering Chief; but suddenly he sees
Thick noisome clouds of flame sulphureous lanced
Against him, favoured by the driving breeze:
Ne'er did Mount Etna send forth flames like these,
Dispensing death from her cavernous womb;
Nor e'er did Indian skies, when most disease
And fervent summer filled the air with gloom,
Rain such thick vapours down, mute Nature to consume.

LXXXIV.

Here globes of wild-fire, there fly burning spears ;
This flame burns black, that bloody red ; the smell
Poisons, the thunder deafens all their ears,
Smoke blinds their eyes, fires scorch them, hot as hell ;
Not long can e'en the moist bull-hides repel
Their fierceness, scarcely do they now defend
The tower, already they begin to swell ;
They reek, they shrink, and with the blaze must blend,
Heightening its ardent rage, if Heaven no succour send.

LXXXV.

Still in the front of all the Duke abides,
Nor changes colour, countenance, or place ;
But cheers on those, who from the shrivelling hides
With water strive the' advancing fires to chase.
Thus went the war ; thus urgent stood their case ;
Their well-used water disappearing fast,
The gathering flames they could no longer face ;
When on the sudden rose a friendly blast,
And the fierce wild-fire back upon its authors cast.

LXXXVI.

The winds fought with the flames, and backward blew
The fires ; for where the foe their sheds had reared,
Upon the soft materials swift it flew,
Which kindled, crackled, blazed, and disappeared.
O glorious Captain ! to thy God endeared,
By thy God guarded ! Heaven itself was found
Ranged on thy side ; the very winds revered
Thy will, and, summoned by thy trumpet's sound,
Obedient rushed to war from all their regions round.

LXXXVII.

But fell Ismene, who saw his sulphurous fires
Forced back against him on the adverse gale,
By his black art, despite the winds, aspires
The laws of Nature yet to countervail ;
Betwixt two hags, his vowed attendants, pale
In his dark mantle, on the walls he reared
His hideous shape ; and with his length of nail,
His squalid aspect, and dishevelled beard,
Pluto himself between two Furies dire appeared.

LXXXVIII.

And now were heard those awful sounds which fill
With deepest horror hell's profoundest streams ;
The winds already roared on every hill,
The sun in clouds withdrew his golden beams ;
When sudden, frustrate of his impious schemes,
A stone, or rather rock, the tower robust,
As still the' accursed wretch high Heaven blasphemes,
Hurled from its bowels with a stroke so just,
As brayed at once their bones and bodies into dust.

LXXXIX.

To bloody dust minute their heads and brains
Were widely scattered with a roaring sound ;
To bloody dust, minuter than the grains
Of corn to meal betwixt rough mill-stones ground ;
With groans the three foul spirits leave the round
Of the blue heavens and fine ethereal sense
Of joy and sunshine, for the shades profound
Of hell ;—learn, mortals, piety from hence,
Nor dare God's slumbering wrath omnipotent incense !

XC.

Meanwhile the engine rescued from the flame
By the kind whirlwind, to the city ran,
And, all resistance now defeated, came
So near the ramparts that its bridge began,
Launched, to attach ; but thither Solyman
Rushed on the instant ; sharply did he ply
His strokes, and certainly the' audacious man
Had hewed it down, but suddenly his eye
Another tower beheld, uprising in the sky.

XCI.

The' enormous pile shot up into the air
Far above spire, mosque, minaret, and tower ;
So that the Pagans in their stupor stare
To see the city subject to its power.
But the fierce Turk still keeps his stand, though lour
The clouds of ruin round him ; he derives
Strength from the strife : and, careless of the shower
Of stones, to cut the bridge still trusts, and strives ;
And his despairing friends with glorying shouts revives.

XCII.

The' archangel Michael, clad in arms divine,
To Godfrey then, but visible to none
Besides, appeared; his face did far outshine,
When clear of every cloud, the noonday sun.
"Godfrey," he cried, "the fated sands are run;
This is the hour to cancel with thy blade
The chains of Sion; thy desire is won!
Droop not, droop not thine eyes to earth, dismayed,
But see what numerous hosts I bring, thine arms to aid.

XCIII.

"Lift up thine eyes, and in mid air the' immense,
Immortal army on its march survey!
For the dim veil that clouds your mortal sense,
And from the cradle to the tomb your clay
Wraps round with darkness, lo! I rend away,
That thou the angels in their shapes mayst see,
And, one short moment, the effulgent ray
Of their celestial essences, with free
Undazzled sight sustain,—long time it may not be.

XCIV.

"Observe the souls of every lord and knight,
Christ's blessed saints, who late but champions were!
With what a holy zeal they seek the fight,
The final glory with thyself to share!
Lo! what mixt clouds of smoke and dust in air
Fluctuate aloft from the dismantled town;
And lo, that lofty heap of ruins! there,
Hugo, conspicuous by his sapphire crown,
Heaves high his golden mace, and beats the huge towers down.

XCV.

"Dudon is he who at the Northern fort,
Which he with fire and sword assaults, prepares
Arms for the Franks, nor ceases to exhort
Fresh knights to mount the tall scalades he bears;
That surpliced Saint who in his tresses wears
The sacerdotal crown, on yonder hill,
Is the blest soul of Ademar,—his cares
The same as erst; observe with what good-will,
He deals his pastoral signs and benedictions still.

XCVI.

"Look higher yet, and, witnessing the war
The whole hierarchy of heaven survey!"
He raised his eyes; and at one prospect saw,
In myriad numbers numberless, the array,
Three squadrons wing'd; each radiating away
In triple phalanx from the observer's eye,
Ring beyond ring,—a beautiful display
Of winged orbs, that, widening as they fly
Sublime, possess the whole circumference of the sky.

XCVII.

Here he his dazzled eyes declined, nor more
The glorious vision in its pomp descried;
When next he looked, the wondrous show was o'er,
And gazing round, he saw on every side
His troops victorious; many a hero vied
After divine Rinaldo to command
The walls, leaped up, and deep his falchion dyed;
Godfrey, this seen, aloof disdained to stand,
But snatched the Red-Cross staff from his flag-bearer's hand,

XCVIII.

And passes first the bridge; but midway here
Finds the stern Soldan ready to debate
His farther passage; few their strokes, but clear
Their prowess,—a small plank the field of fate!
"Lo, here," the Soldan shouts, "I consecrate,
Here yield my gallant spirit up this day,
For Sion's good! So ho! my friends, I prate,—
Cut the pontoon down at my back, and they
Shall have small cause to boast the pleasure of their prey!"

XCIX.

But when he saw far-off Rinaldo tend
Toward him, and all his friends in flight, he said;
"What now remains? if thus my life I spend,
To what advantage will my blood be shed?"
Revolving thus, with slow disdainful tread
He turned aside, and left the pass assayed
Free to the Chief: who, following as he fled
The Soldan's footsteps, with his brandished blade,
High on the rampart walls the purple Cross displayed.

C.

The glorious ensign in a thousand wreaths .
And folds voluminous rejoicing twines;
It seems the wind on it more sweetly breathes;
It seems the sun on it more brightly shines;
That each tossed javelin, each aimed shaft declines
To strike the staff; the streets Hosannas sound;
Floods clap their hands, on mountains dance the pines;
Seems it that Sion, that her green hills crowned,
Stoop from the clouds their crests, and bend adoring round.

CI.

Then raised the Christians all their long loud shout
Of Victory, joyful, resonant, and high;
Their words the towers and temples lengthen out;
To the glad sound the mountains make reply:
At the same moment, joining in the cry,
Tancred each strong obstruction overthrew
Raised by Argantes; brought his engine nigh,
Cast out his bridge, and, without more ado,
Leaped on the conquered wall, and raised his standard too.

CII.

But on the hills toward the South, where fought
Raymond the hoary with the Syrian king,
The Gascon knights their engine had not brought
Yet to the walls, nor possibly could bring;
For there the Tyrant had in aid a ring
Of soldiery, the flower of all his host,
Who stubbornly with mace, with sword, and sling,
Stood to the strife; the walls too on that coast
Were, as less firm and high, with engines strengthened most.

CIII.

Besides, on that steep side the' enormous tower
Less steady footing for its passage found;
Nor could their utmost industry and power
Correct the rugged nature of the ground:
But when the shout from all the quarters round
Reached the two hosts that here the walls contest,
Both Aladine and Raymond by the sound
Were well assured that on the North and West,
The long defended town already was possessed.

CIV.

Which heard, the Count shouts to the knights he led ;
" Taken already is the' assaulted town ;
And does it conquer us? shall it be said
We only share not in the day's renown ?"
But here the troubled king, quite desperate grown
Of the dispute, drew off his chivalry
To the strong-hold of his endangered Crown,
His last lorn hope, a fortress strong and high,
Where yet long time he trusts the' assailants to defy.

CV.

Then the whole host pours in, not o'er the walls
Alone, but through the gates, which soon unclose,
Battered or burnt; and in wide ruin falls
Each strong defence that might their march oppose.
Rages the sword; and Death, the Slaughterer, goes
"Twixt Woe and Horror with gigantic tread,
From street to street; the blood in torrents flows,
And settles in lagoons, on all sides fed,
And swelled with heaps on heaps of dying and of dead.

END OF CANTO XVIII.



JERUSALEM DELIVERED.

CANTO XIX.





Stanza 16.

ARGUMENT.

TANCRED in single combat slays his foe,
 The terrible Argantes; Aladine
 Flees to the citadel, and saveth so
 His host; Erminia challenges Vafrine;
 Of the leagued hosts reveals the masked design,
 Accompanies him back, and on the sands
 Finds her loved lord half dead beneath a pine;
 First mourns, then cures him; Godfrey understands
 Ormondo's plot, and acts as circumstance demands.

JERUSALEM DELIVERED.

CANTO XIX.

I

Now prudence, death, or fear each Pagan knight
Has ravished from the walls; alone his mace
Argantes plies upon the battled height,
And obstinately still disputes the place;
Still with a cheerful and intrepid face
Fights on secure against the chivalry
That hems him in; and, dreading the disgrace,
Far more than death, of being forced to fly,
Sooner than seem to yield stands all resolved to die.

II.

But beyond all importunate to quell
The Pagan, Tancred presses through the crowd;
The knight Argantes recognized right well
By his known arms, keen strokes, and bearing proud,
For him who fought with him before, and vowed
Return on the sixth morning, nor the vow
Fulfilled, made captive; whence he shouts aloud;
“ Prince! is it thus you keep your faith? and now
Return you thus to war, redeemed one scarce knows how ?

III.

“ Late you return, and not alone, yet I
Shun not the battle, nor the issues fear;
Although, to all appearance, you draw nigh
Not as a knight, but as an engineer:
But make a shield of your Italians here,
New forms of war, strange arms invent in aid,
They shall not serve you now, false chevalier,
Foul slaughterer of fair ladies, to evade
The death already due to my defrauded blade !”

IV.

The good Lord Tancred answered with a smile
Of some disdain, in terms of like proud glee ;
" All late as is my slow return,—erewhile,
"T will seem, I fancy, much too soon for thee ;
For thou shalt wish, on how devout a knee,
Some Alp or ocean spread its wide barrier
Of space betwixt us ; then too shalt thou see,
By fatal proof, if cowardice or fear
Has made indeed my sword so long a stranger here.

V.

" But step aside, O thou whose haughty arms
Big giants only and tough knights chastise ;
Thee to a field apart from these alarms
The mighty slaughterer of fair dames defies !"
This said, he to his followers turns, and cries ;
" Back from the warrior ! brave him not a blow !
Nay, vassals, never grudge your Chief his prize ;
For mine he is more than a common foe,
Mine, both by challenge now, and promise long ago !"

VI.

" Come down, alone or followed, to the feud,
E'en as you will," the Saracen replied ;
" To the thronged field or to the lonely wood,
Whate'er the odds, I stir not from your side !"
Thus ending parle, the challenged and defied
In open concord from the walls descend,
By mortal fight their quarrel to decide ;
Hate made them one, and, e'en as friend would friend,
Each did the other's life, from pure despite, defend.

VII.

Great is the thirst of praise, great the desire
Which Tancred has to slay a foe so grand ;
Nor would his blood, he fancies, slake his ire,
If but a drop were shed by other's hand :
He guards the Pagan with his shield ; and, " Stand !
Strike not !" he cries to all he meets ; and so,
Safe from the rage of each encountering band,
From falchion, dagger, spear and bended bow,
Through thousand angry friends he brings his careless foe.

VIII.

The busy roar of war, the' invaded town,
And void pavilions far they leave behind,
Following a footpath, that o'er dale and down
In many a secret coil and tangle twined;
At length a small secluded vale they find,
Deep in the heart of woody hills embayed,
As it for sylvan sport had been designed,
Or Roman circus by proconsul made
For Gladiatorial show,—shut in by silent shade.

IX.

Here then they paused; and, full of anxious thought,
Argantes turned, the' afflicted town to view;
Tancred, perceiving that the knight had brought
With him no shield, his own to distance threw;
And said, "What gloom does thus thy soul subdue?
Think'st thou the destined hour to terminate
Thy life at length is come? if this thou rue,
With pensive mind prophetic of thy fate,
Thy fear is useless all, thy foresight comes too late!"

X.

"I think," said he, (and sighed), "on that lorn town,
The pomp of realms, about to pass away,
That queen of Syria, hoary in renown,
Whose fatal ruin I have failed to stay;
I think how insignificant a prey
To my disdain and vengeance is the due
Which on thy head Heaven destines me to-day!"
He ceased; and each to each with caution drew,
For well each armed knight his rival's prowess knew.

XI.

Tancred is light of limb in hand and foot,
Swift as the wind that o'er the valley scours;
Monstrous in girth, like some terrific brute,
And taller by the head Argantes towers;
Tancred now wheels, now traverses, now cowers,
Like the coiled snake in act at will to glide
Home to his victim, or with fiercer powers
Shoot out; still parrying stroke with stroke, he tried
All points of skill to turn the' assailing sword aside.

XII.

But spacious and erect, Argantes shews
Like skill, in different posture; as he can,
Straight to his mark with stretched-out arm he goes,
And seeks to' encounter not the steel, but man;
That tries each moment some new point or plan,
This never fails an instant to present
His sabre at the face; and, swift of scan,
With threatening blade stands ready to prevent
The stol'n advance, quick pass, and treacherous feigned
intent.

XIII.

E'en thus two gallant ships, when not a gale
Stirs the smooth surface of the silent main,
One famed for size, and one for speed of sail,
With force unequal, equal fight maintain;
This bears down lightly, goes and comes again,
Wheels round from prow to poop, and still the eye
Mocks, whilst the other doth unmoved remain,
And ever as the nimbler one draws nigh,
Threats with its vast machines wild ruin from on high.

XIV.

Whilst to rush in the wily Latin strives,
Shunning the point that glittered at his breast,
The blade Argantes brandishes, and drives
Full at the face, which Tancred would arrest;
But the fell Pagan, as he forward pressed,
Strongly, and swift as flies a Parthian shaft,
Coiled his strong wrist aslant,—the sword digressed,
And ploughed his side; whereat he gaily laughed,
And cried; "By blest Mahound, the craftsman's foiled in
craft!"

XV.

Prince Tancred bit his lips 'twixt scorn and shame,
Laid by all points of skill, and on his foe
Burns for revenge with such an eager aim,—
Victory appears defeat, achieved so slow;
The boast he answers by his sword, and lo!
Where the barred vizor opens to the sight,
Dares a fierce thrust; the formidable blow
Argantes breaks, and, in the last despite
Of risk, at half-sword's length stept in the' audacious knight.

XVI.

With his left hand the Pagan's strong right arm
He seized, and with his right his falchion plied ;
With many a deadly gash of deepest harm
Piercing at will the undefended side.
"To his triumphant tutor," loud he cried,
"This happy answer the foiled sciolist
Yields in reply!" with passion, pain, and pride,
Argantes groaned, and writhing, strove to twist
From the Italian's grasp, in vain, the prisoned wrist.

XVII.

His sword suspended by its chain at length
He left, and griped his rival round the waist ;
The same did Tancred, and with all their strength
Each grappling crushed the other, breast to breast :
Not with more force divine Alcides pressed.
Upheaved Antæus on the Libyan sands ;—
In this their long and muscular caress
Of hate, they knit tenacious knots and bands,
Flinging in various forms their brawny arms and hands.

XVIII.

Pressing, compressed, whirled round, they wrestled, till
Both overpowered, together pressed the ground ;
Argantes, whether by good chance or skill,
His better arm in perfect freedom found ;
But the more dexterous hand to strike and wound
Tancred had undermost, and thus restrained,
Himself from the fierce arm that clasped him round,
Strong with the sense of risk, he disenchained,
And lightly leaping up, firm footing straight regained.

XIX.

Far slower rose the' unwieldy Saracine,
And ere he rose received a cleaving blow ;
But as in blustering winds the mountain pine
Rears, the next moment that its head stoops low,
Its leafy forehead to the clouds, e'en so
When most oppressed, his valour rises higher ;
And now again ferocious thrusts they throw,
Fierce strokes exchange ; and, in their sightless ire,
The fight, with less of skill, grows momentarily more dire.

XX.

From Tancred's wounds large drops of purple came,
But from the Pagan's flowed a perfect flood;
And now his fury, like a wasting flame
Unfed with fuel, faints from loss of blood;
Tancred, who saw his foe, in strength subdued,
Slowly and slower wave his weary blade,
To noblest pity calmed his own fell mood,
The angry passions of his soul allayed,
Stept a few paces back, and thus mild speaking, said :

XXI.

"Yield thee, brave man! and recognise in me,
Or in strong Fate, thy victor; live, Sir Knight!
No spoil, no triumph do I seek o'er thee,
Nor to my arms reserve a victor's right!"
To this the Pagan, with a frown like Night,
More fierce than ever, kindling into flame
The slumbering furies of his soul, in spite
Replied; "Dost thou, dost thou the' advantage claim,
And dost thou dare to tempt Argantes to his shame!

XXII.

"Use thy scorn'd fortune; I will yet chastise,
Presumptuous fool! the frenzy of that phrase!"
As a spent taper musters ere it dies
Its flames, to perish in the splendid blaze,
So, cherishing with rage the blood that plays
Thus feebly in his veins, he would supply
Strength to the spirit which so fast decays;
And his last hour of life, which now drew nigh,
Crown with a glorious end, and like a hero die.

XXIII.

To his left hand its fellow he applied,
And with them both impelled his heavy blade;
Down it descended,—meeting, struck aside
The prince's sword, nor there its fury staid;
But, glancing from the shoulder, did invade
All his left side in its oblique career,
And many wounds at the same moment made;
If Tancred quailed not at the stroke severe,
'T was that his heart was formed incapable of fear.

XXIV.

His blow the Paynim doubled, but he spent
On the void air his desperate energy,
As Tancred, conscious of his fierce intent,
The stroke prevented, slipping nimbly by.
By thine own weight o'erbalanced dost thou lie
On earth, Argantes, nor couldst shun the fall;
Thyself hast thou o'erthrown,—O fatal die,
Well cast! thrice happy, that none else can call
Himself thy conqueror now, or triumph in thy thrall.

XXV.

His gaping wounds the fall made yet more wide,
And from their lips fresh purple torrents broke;
Raised by his hand upon one knee, he tried
On new defence the battle to provoke.
“Yield,” cried the courteous prince, “and live!” no stroke
He struck or menaced, as he made the’ appeal;
The sullen Pagan not an accent spoke,
But at swift stealth shot out his treacherous steel,
And with a shout of joy exulting pierced his heel.

XXVI.

Then rose the rage of Tancred, and he said;
“Villain! dost thou my mercy thus deride!”
Then plunged, and plunged again his fatal blade,
Where a free pass the aventayle supplied.
Thus died Argantes: as he lived, he died,
Dying, he menaced death; no lamentation
Broke from his lips, but fixt, unbending pride,
Ferocious hate, and scorn of all salvation,
Spoke in his latest words and last gesticulation.—

XXVII.

His sword then sheathing, to his guardian Saint
Prince Tancred paid his solemn thanks sincere;
But from the strife enfeebled, worn and faint,
His bloody meed has cost the victor dear;
So that he seriously began to fear
His limbs would scarcely serve him to retrace
His homeward path; yet to the pine-tree near,
Which kept the entrance of that shady place,
He step by step moved on, with slow unsteady pace.

XXVIII.

Not far can the weak knight his steps command,
The more he haastes, more tired, the less his speed;
Whence he at length sits down, and on his hand,
His hand, that trembles like a shaking reed,
Propped on his elbow, leans his head; fast bleed
His wounds, the scene spins round, his giddy brain
Grows dull, and night seems in her sable weed
To wrap the day; at length he swoons with pain,
And undistinguished lies the slayer from the slain.

XXIX.

Whilst the two lords pursue their lonely fight,
So fierce and bloody made by private hate,
The angry victors in the city smite
The guilty people wide from gate to gate:
Pressed, on all sides they rush, to shun their fate;
Oh who can fully picture in his page
The horrors of the sack! what tongue relate
In fitting terms the agony—the rage—
The dreadful scenes that passed on such a spacious stage!

XXX.

Each place is choked with carnage, filled with death;
In intertangled heaps the slaughtered lie;
The falling rests upon the fallen; beneath
The' unburied dead the buried living die;
Here with dishevelled locks mad mothers fly,
Straining their infants to their breasts; and there
The savage spoiler, drunk with victory
And rifled treasure, by her golden hair
Drags off the shrieking maid to his voluptuous lair.

XXXI.

But through the streets which near the western hills,
Where he beholds the solemn Temple stand,
All moist and horrid with the blood he spills,
Rinaldo, rushing, drives the Paynim band;
The cruel falchion in his red right-hand
O'er their plumed heads in bickering circles waves;
Its strokes nor shield nor helmet can withstand;
He bleeds who vainly turns, he dies who braves;
It is the want of arms, not armour here which saves.

XXXII.

On steel alone his noble steel descends,
The' unarmed he scorns to hurt; the armed, the strong
Who dare him not, and whom no mail defends,
By frowns and dreadful shouts he drives along.
O who can tell, nor do his valour wrong,
What prodigies he wrought; how wide he spread,
How menaced, spared, spurred on the trembling throng;
How with unequal risk, but equal dread,
Armed and unarmed alike his face affrighted fled!—

XXXIII.

Already with the crowd their bravest men,
A numerous party, had the Temple gained;
Which, burnt and oft rebuilt as it had been,
The name of its great founder still retained.
Of cedar, gold, and marbles richly stained,
The glorious tribute of a thousand shores,
King Solomon had framed it: it remained,
If with less splendid roofs and plainer floors,
Strong with embattled towers, firm walls, and brazen doors.

XXXIV.

Reaching this fortress, in whose spacious heart
The multitude were fled, Rinaldo found
The portals closed, and every single part
Of the high battlements with lances crowned,
And threatening mangonels: he rolled around
His flashing eyes, and twice the strong retreat
Scanned from its topmost turret to the ground,
Some narrow pass to spy, and twice in heat
Circled the spacious pile on swift, impatient feet.

XXXV.

As the destroying wolf at midnight prowls,
With eager hungry jaws and eyes of fire,
Round the penned fold, and disappointed growls
With fierce instinctive hate and native ire;
So goes Rinaldo, wild with the desire
To penetrate the fabric he surveys;
In vain—it stands impassive and entire;
In the grand Court at length his steps he stays,
And they the' assault expect with fixt, despairing gaze.

XXXVI.

By chance, for some rare use reserved, there lay
A long and tapering beam the hero nigh;
The tightest argosy in Genoa's bay
Has not a mast more stately, stout, and high;
On this the noble Infant cast his eye,
And with that hand to which all weights were light,
Poising the formidable lance on high,
To his friends' wonder and his foes' affright,
Hurled it against the gates, with unexampled might.

XXXVII.

Nor brass nor marble stone could stand before
The sudden force of that tremendous blow;
The sounding hinges from the rock it tore,
Broke the strong locks, and laid the portals low;
Nor battering engine, nor balista-bow,
Nor fulminating petard, death's thunderball,
Could have done more: in, like a deluge, flow
Through the void pass vast numbers, at the call
Of the triumphant youth, the' inspiring soul of all.

XXXVIII.

Their dreadful slaughter black and mournful made
That lofty pile, once consecrate to God;
O heavenly justice! sharp, if long delayed,
On wicked nations falls thy chastening rod:
Under thy secret influence, at thy nod,
Rage woke in hearts by nature soft and mild;
Till the grim Frank alone on corse trod,
And the revilers, in their turn reviled,
Washed with their blood the fane their sins had late defiled.

XXXIX.

But Solyman meanwhile to the strong tower
Which yet the name of David bore, was sped,
And with the gathered remnant of his power,
Blocked up each street that to the fortress led;
And thither too the feeble Tyrant fled,
Whom when the Soldan saw, he thus bespoke:
"Come, famous Prince! and shield thy noble head
On the towered summit of this lofty rock,
Where thou the worst assaults of battle still may'st mock.

XL.

"Here from the rage of hostile swords, thy crown,
Thy life, and kingdom mayst thou yet defend;"
"Woe 's me!" he answered, "woe is me! my Town
Barbaric hands from the foundations rend;
My race is run,—my rule is at an end,—
I lived, I reigned; I live and reign no more;
For all that now is left me, O my friend,
Is to exclaim, 'We were!'—all, all is o'er!
Our final hour's at hand; pale Death is at the door!"

XLI.

"Where then," the angry Soldan made exclaim,
"Where is thine old heroic courage flown?
Ill-fortune take our kingdoms! are not fame,
Worth, pride, and kingly grandeur yet our own!
These with us stay, though those be overthrown:
But rest within thy weary limbs, and court
Refreshment; there are those will guard thy throne:"
Thus saying, he at once unclosed the port,
And led the hoary king within the' embattled fort.

XLII.

His iron mace he grasps with both his hands,
Girds fast the trusty sabre to his thigh,
And in the' attempted pass intrepid stands,
The whole Frank people singly to defy;
Quick, mortal blows fall horrid from on high,
The rash they daunt, the' heroic they abase;
Whom they kill not, they stun at least,—all fly
At length, and vacant leave the' invested place,
Where'er he cares to move with his gigantic mace.—

XLIII.

But lo! well sheathed in brigandine of brass,
Arrived, and followed by a hundred knights,
Earl Raymond rushes to the dangerous pass,
And the tremendous weapon sternly slights;
He at the Soldan first, but vainly smites,
Vainly his sword descends; but not in vain
The furious Saracen his stroke requites;
Struck on the temples, with bewildered brain
And quivering arms he lies, extended on the plain.—

XLIV.

And now the vanquished reassume the fire
Which fear had banished from their hearts of late,
And the Frank victors, beaten back, retire,
Or slaughtered fall within the portal-gate :
But the Arch-Genius of the fierce debate,
Seeing the earl, betwixt alive and dead,
Lie with the slaughtered at his feet, elate,
Called to his Saracens behind, and said ;
“ Drag in this captive knight ; what now have ye to dread ? ”

XLV.

Forward they rushed to execute the deed,
But found the task both dangerous and severe ;
For to the rescue, with like eager speed,
All Raymond's people flock, with sword and spear.
There pious duty fights, brute fury here,
In no mean cause, and with no mean intent ;
The life—the freedom of so brave a peer
Hang on their blades ; to seize him these are bent,—
Those bleed, the' affront at once to' avenge and to prevent.

XLVI.

Yet had the stubborn Turk at length prevailed,
Such eager thirst for vengeance he displayed,
For 'gainst his thundering weapon nought availed
The sevenfold shield, fine helm, or tempered blade,—
But from each side a new and powerful aid
Was suddenly perceived approaching near,
The well-contested fortress to invade ;
And both at once, from adverse points, appear—
The sovereign Captain there, the young Rinaldo here.

XLVII.

Then as a shepherd, when the whirlwind's blast
Comes sweeping on, with lightning, hail, and rain,
Seeing the skies with thousand clouds o'ercast,
His fleecy charge drives from the open plain ;
And looks around, solicitous to gain
The sheltered valley or o'erarching rock,
Where Heaven's hot wrath they may unhurt sustain ;
With crook and cry he forward speeds the flock,
And last avoids himself the storm's infuriate shock :—

XLVIII.

Just so the Pagan Prince, when he descried
The' inevitable tempest, heard the blast
That startled heaven, and saw, on either side,
The field with groves of lances overcast,
Sent back his men, well guarded by his vast
Encircling shield and adamantine mace,
Into the tower, himself retiring last ;
Last he retires, but with that haughty pace,
Which shews he neither yields in fear nor in disgrace.

XLIX.

'T was task enough for him the tower to gain ;
Scarce were the portals barred, the' escape made good,
Than both the doors and bars were rent in twain,
And on the threshold young Rinaldo stood ;
Nor lingered there ; desire to see subdued
The knight in deeds of arms unmatched, disdain,
And his own oath impelled him to the feud ;
Remembering well his promise to the Dane,
Of keen revenge on him who had Prince Sweno slain.

L.

And then, e'en then had his unconquered hand
Essayed the stubborn citadel, nor there
Had the Turk found perchance his dauntless stand
Of much avail—the victor's blade was bare,—
But falling twilight now obscured the air,
And loud and long the warning trumpet blew,
Sounding retreat ; within the spacious square
Godfrey abode, and round his forces drew,
Prompt with the morning sun the struggle to renew.

LI.

“ Lo !” he exclaimed, with transport on his brow,
“ The God of Sabaoth has our armies blessed ;
The tug of war is o'er ; but little now
Remains, my friends, your glory to arrest,
Nought to dismay ; this tower which we invest,
The last sad refuge of the Paynim, ere
To-morrow ends, we from their hands shall wrest ;
Meanwhile let pity urge you with all care
To tend your comrades' wounds, and sooth the pains they
bear.

LII.

“ Go, care for those who at a price so dear
Have of these kingdoms purchased thus the sway !
This more befits the Christian chevalier,
Than base desire of vengeance, or of prey.
Too much, ah, too much cruelty this day
Hath witnessed ! too much lust of treasure still—
I speak it to your shame—do some display !
But at your peril plunder more, or kill ;
Heralds ! your trumpets sound, and publish forth my will.”

LIII.

This said, he went where, from his swoon awoke,
Groaned in his pain the faint Provençal Chief :
Nor with less boldness to his soldiers spoke
The dauntless Turk, and thus disguised his grief ;
“ Heaven, O my friends, will yet a bright relief
Bring to our gloom ! be firm ; in fortune’s spite,
Your flower of hope yet shews a verdant leaf ;
For under all this glare of false affright,
Our harm has been but small, our loss excèeding light.

LIV.

“ The City is not seized ; the Christian Lords
Have gained the ramparts, beat the vulgar down,
But in the person of your king, your swords,
And shields, you yet comprise the glorious Town.
Safe stands your Monarch, safe you see his crown,
Safe his best knights, whilst round this noble host
Strong walls arise ; vain trophy of renown,
Let the gay Franks the’ abandoned suburbs boast,
To them the’ ambitious game may yet at last be lost.

LV.

“ May be ? it must ! for, flattered into pride
By their so prosperous fortune, all their mind
Will but to ceaseless riot, homicide,
And most intemperate dalliance be inclined.
In this wild tumult, drunk with blood, and blind
To all but beauty, they must needs appear
But as a rolling wave before the wind,
If the Egyptian host, which now is near,
Come with the clouds of night, and take them in the rear.

LVI.

"We with our engines may meanwhile annoy
Each street that leads to yon accursed tomb;
The loftiest structures o'er our foes destroy,
And thus our lordship in the town resume."
With these bold words he dissipates their gloom;
Exiles their fear, exiles their wild amaze,
And plants both hope and courage in their room:
Whilst these events were passing, midst a blaze
Of arms and gorgeous tents, unawed Vafrino strays.

LVII.

The lark was warbling sweet her evening song,
When through the shadows of declining day
Vafrino left the' encampment; all night long
He travelled on his dark and lonely way;
High Ascalon he passed, ere morning grey
O'er the dim landscape shed its grateful light,
And when the sun with culminating ray
Had reached its hot meridian, to the right
The vast, the boundless camp burst proudly on his sight.

LVIII.

Millions of tents, o'erwaved with flags unfurled,
Green, purple, gold, and crimson, he espies;
And hears such strange wild tongues, and such a world
Of savage sounds from barbarous metals rise,
Trumpet, and horn, and gong, with camels' cries,
Roarings of elephants, and neighings clear
Of shrill-voiced coursers, climbing to the skies,
That to himself he says, with soul sincere,
"All Asia, Libya all are sure transported here!"

LIX.

He first the' encampment and its strength surveys,
The circling rampart, its extent, and height,
Then seeks no more obscure and winding ways,
But boldly issues to the public sight;
And with an air most unconcerned and light
Enters the regal gates direct, and now
Asks, and now answers questions, with a sleight
But to be equalled by the frank bold brow
Which makes his answers good, and greets it cares not how.

LX.

Through the long crowded streets, the tents and squares,
Now here, now there, solicitous he turns;
The horses, armours, chiefs, the name each bears,
Their arts and customs he observes and learns;
Nor satisfied with this, his spirit burns,
And partly manages to know the bent
Of their most secret projects and concerns;
So well he speeds beneath his fair ostent,
As e'en to win access to the imperial tent.

LXI.

Here, looking round, he marked a rent, through which
The voice within found egress, and whereby
The Viceroy's private cabinet, a rich
Recess, was obvious to the curious eye;
So that whoever chose thereto to' apply
His ear without, might gather whatsoe'er
Transpired within; at this the matchless spy
Planted himself, as with assiduous care
The tent's defective seam adroitly to repair.

LXII.

The Chief bareheaded stood, in arms, and wore
A vest of Tyrian purple; in the rear
Two pages his bright shield and helmet bore;—
Thoughtful he stood, and, leaning on his spear,
Gave heed to one who with a look severe,
Tall in his stature, sinewy in his frame,
High points discussed; Vafrino was all ear;
And, surely fancying that he heard the name
Of Bouillon's lord, yet more inquisitive became.

LXIII.

He heard the Chieftain question; "Art thou then
So sure of Godfrey's death?" "So sure," said he,
"I take my oath by Allah, ne'er again
But as a matador thy face to see;
I will outstrip all those who are with me
Sworn to the deed; nor ask I other bliss,
Than to hang up in trophy, by decree
Of our great prince, in his metropolis,
The man's rich arms, subscribed with some such verse as
this:—

LXIV.

"These arms in war from the Frank Chief, the curse
And scourge of Asia, brave Ormondo tore,
When him he slew; the fame whereof, this verse
And trophied marble laud for evermore!"
"Of this," the armed Leader said, "no more;
Think not the king will leave unglorified
A deed which both the Egypts must adore;
Thy wish, besure, he will fulfil with pride,
And grace thy conquering brows with priceless gems beside.

LXV.

"Now then the counterfeited arms prepare,
For the great day of fight approaches fast:"
"They are all ready," he replied, and there
Both ended parle, and from the chamber passed.
Suspense and doubt Vafrino's mind o'ercast;
Long as he weighed the seeming aim and end,
Of their discourse, the project to the last
Remained obscure,—he could not comprehend,
What by this feint of arms the traitors could intend.

LXVI.

Thence he departed, nor the livelong night
His eyes to slumber or repose resigned;
But when that mighty camp at morning light
Unfurled its thousand banners to the wind,
He in their march the hostile squadrons joined,
Like the trained hound sequacious of its scent;
With them he halted when the day declined,
And, as before, stalked slow from tent to tent,
Eager to gather more of this disguised intent.

LXVII.

On a rich throne mid knights and damsels gay,
Searching around, Armida he descries;
Forlorn she sits, and inly seems to weigh
Some deep sad thought, for as she sits she sighs.
On her white hand in melancholy guise
She leans her rosy cheek, and so would fain
Hide the love-darting radiance of her eyes;
Weeps she or no he knows not, but 't is plain
The stars in heaven are dim, and lour, presaging rain.

LXVIII.

In front of her Adrastus sits, nor heeds
Aught but her charms,—he moves not, scarce respires,
So stedfastly he hangs on her, and feeds
His pining hopes and unappeased desires.
But Tisaphernes now the dame admires,
Now eyes the savage, whom in soul he spurns
From her dear sight; the whilst with changeful fires
His visage dark and radiant shews by turns,
As Love's mild watchlight shines, or Wrath's hot beacon burns.

LXIX.

Then Altamore he views, where more apart
He stands, enclosed amidst her virgins bright;
He lets not loose his glances, but with art
Rules his fond fancy and his wishful sight:
His left eye marks her hand, her face, his right
Glides down voluptuous on a sweeter quest,
And secretly slips in, to its delight,
Where the too careless and indulgent vest
Reveals, at every swell, the beauty of her breast.

LXX.

At length Armida raised her eyes, and straight
Her brow cleared up; and through the clouds of grief
With which her pensive features gloomed of late,
Flashed a sweet smile in beautiful relief.
“Prince,” she said, turning to the Indian Chief,
“Thy vaunts have power my sorrows to assuage;
For they confirm me in the fond belief
That I shall have quick vengeance: sweet is rage,
When willing Hope takes up Revenge's daring gage.

LXXI.

“For Allah's sake, serene,” the Indian said,
“Thy mournful aspect, and thy griefs control;
For soon indeed Rinaldo's hated head
I in glad vengeance at thy feet will roll;
Or, if it more thy sorrow should console,
In chains conduct him to whatever jail
May please thee most; I swear it on my soul.”
His rival, hearing thus the ruffian rail,
Deigned not a word himself, but gnawed his bitter nail.

LXXII.

She, turning then on Tisapherne a smile,
Said; "What say'st thou, and how dost thou decide?"
"I, who am backward in this vaunting style,"
The noble Prince in irony replied,
"Will follow this grim champion with a stride
Less stately, and at distance:" his sharp sneer
Stung the fierce savage to the quick, who cried;
"And fit it is that he whose arm must fear
To match the king of Inde's, *should* linger far arear!"

LXXIII.

The Persian, nettled at the word, tossed high
The haughty plumes upon his head, and said;
"O, were I master of my will, had I
But free permission to unsheath my blade,
Which was the lingerer should be soon displayed!
Nor thee, nor thy big vaunts, ferocious brute!
But Heaven and unconsenting Love I dread:"
He ceased; Adrastus rushed to the dispute;
But then Armida rose, and twixt them placed her foot.

LXXIV.

"Why will you thus retract the oaths," said she,
"Which you so oft have given? respect my woes;
Both are my champions; let that title be
The bond your fatal discords to compose:
He that is wroth, is wroth with me; who throws
Scorn on his comrade, spares not to provoke
My just displeasure; to your cost be foes!"
Thus she exclaimed; and thus, beneath a yoke
Stronger than steel, their hot, rebellious spirits broke.

LXXV.

Vafrine was there; and, treasuring in his mind
All he heard mentioned, from the tent retired;
Some deep dark plot he clearly saw designed,
Some plot, that was not thus to have transpired;
But this was all; he busily inquired
The naked fact, but fruitlessly; defeat
And difficulty but the more inspired
The anxious wish his mission to complete;
Fixed or to learn the truth, or there his death to meet.

LXXVI.

A thousand tricks and subtleties of brain,
A thousand unimagined means he tried,
To worm the secret out, but still in vain,—
The plan was still unknown, the arms unspied.
Fortune at length, when wit alone could guide
His steps no farther, lent her gracious aid,
And the dark knot of all his doubts untied ;
So that all points of the dire project laid
Against good Bouillon's life, before him were displayed.

LXXVII.

Thither he turned again, where still among
Her armed lovers sat the Syrian queen,
Judging the truth would soonest find a tongue,
Where such a crowd of visitors convene.
Here now he greets a damsel with the mien
Of one in all polite enchantments versed,
As though the lady he before had seen,
And but renewed some friendship that had erst
"Twixt them subsisted long ; and frankly he conversed.

LXXVIII.

" Fain would I too," he sportively began,
" Become the champion of some charming maid,
And, in fulfilment of the purposed plan,
The blood of Bouillon or Rinaldo shed ;
Ask then some boon, my Beauty, that may wed
My soul to your sweet service ; what you please,
Or stout earl's heart or barbarous baron's head :"
Thus he commenced, intending by degrees
To slip from gay to grave, and learn the chief's decrees.

LXXIX.

But as he spake, he smiled ; and in a way
So natural and unfeigned, that to his side
Another damsel, who had marked the play
Of his expressive face, drew near, and cried ;
" Nay ! for thy falchion choose no other bride
Than my commands, for on its aid my heart
Is set ; nor think such love misplaced,—beside
By old consent my knight indeed thou art,
And e'en as such, we two must have some talk apart."

LXXX.

Withdrawn, she spoke : " I know thee well, Vafrine !
Me too thou needs must know ; " the subtle Spy
Felt his heart fail him, but with lively mien
Her glance returned, and smiling made reply ;
" Nay, gracious lady ! ne'er before have I,
That I remember, seen your face, although
Its beauty asks the gaze of every eye
Fitly to praise it ; this alone I know,
My name is much unlike the one which you bestow.

LXXXI.

" My mother bore me on Biserta's plains,
Her name Lesbina, mine is Almanzore : "
Quick she replied ; " All that to thee pertains
I long have known, dissemble it no more ;
Hold not thyself so secret, I implore ;
I am thy friend, and for thy good would dare
No little risk,—Erminia I, of yore
A Queen's blest daughter and a King's rich heir,
Then good Prince Tancred's thrall, and subject to thy care.

LXXXII.

" Two blessed months thy captive I remained,
A revered nun in a delightful cell,
And in all courteous modes was entertained,—
The same, the same I am ; behold me well ! "
The squire failed not, when on her beauty fell
His closer gaze, to recognize the fair :
" All fears," she added, " from thy mind expel ;
Fear not for me, thy life shall be my care ;
By the bright sun in heaven, by heaven itself I swear !

LXXXIII.

" Nay, when thou partest, take me back, my friend,
To my dear prison—(pardon me the phrase) ;
For here in bitter liberty I spend
Whole restless nights and melancholy days ;
And if perchance thou 'rt lingering here to gaze
Upon our camp, and with ingenious brain
Pry through our plans, great cause hast thou to praise
Thy happy stars ; for I will things explain,
Which else thy utmost skill had failed to ascertain."

LXXXIV.

Thus she : but, thoughtful of Armida's snares,
He silent stood, considering in his mind,
' Woman 's a false and chattering thing,—she swears,
And will and will not, just as sits the wind;
Simple 's the man, and credulous, and blind,
Who trusts a word she says;' at length he cried,
After long thought, "If thou 'rt indeed inclined
To go, so be it; I will be thy guide;
Leave we the rest to wait a more convenient tide."

LXXXV.

And now the gongs and trumpets sound to horse,
And through the host an apt confusion reigns;
Vafrino leaves her tent, whilst she perforce
Rejoins her friends, awhile with them remains,
And in gay talk their idlesse entertains
With jocund praises of her new-made knight;
Then steals off slily; mounts her palfrey; gains
The place prescribed, and with Vafrino light
O'er the wide champain takes her unregarded flight.

LXXXVI.

When they had reached the desert, and in air
Beheld the distant towers of Gaza fade,
Vafrino begged the virgin to declare
What secret plot was against Godfrey laid:
She then the whole conspiracy displayed,
The treacherous web unwinding, fold by fold;
"Eight warriors are there of the court," she said,
"In this insidious bond of guilt enrolled,
Of whom the most renowned is Ormond, base as bold."

LXXXVII.

"These, whether moved by hatred or disdain,
Have thus conspired, and 't is their shrewd design,
When in pitched battle, or to lose or gain
These Asian realms, the two great armies join,
To bear upon their coats the Red-cross sign,
And armed like Franks commingle in the fight;
And as 't is known the guards of Godfrey shine
In *or* and *argent*, they themselves will dight
In the like foreign vests, emblazoning gold and white."

LXXXVIII.

"But all will wear some token on the crest,
Whereby their friends may know them for allies;
And when both armies lay their spears in rest,
And the war thickens and the tumults rise,
They will your Chief track out, and in the guise
Of guards with amicable zeal crowd round,
To pierce his bosom; if they strike, he dies;
For know, their swords with poison have been ground,
That death may be dealt out in every separate wound.

LXXXIX.

"And as their Chieftain learned from public fame
That none with surer skill could signify
Your arms and dress, he fixed on me to frame
Their feigned array, and forced me to comply.
This is the cause I leave the camp; I fly
The' imperious biddings which that Asp of Nile
Might further give; his trains of treachery
My heart abhors, nor ever shall such guile
Or masked deceit again my virgin heart defile.

XC.

"This is the cause, nor this alone,"—and here
She ceased, and, colouring to a rosy red,
Cast down her eyes, nor could Vafirno hear
Well the last words, which much she wished unsaid.
Solicitous to know what thoughts could shed
Such deep confusion o'er her cheek, he pressed
The virgin home,—“Of little faith!” he said,
“Why the true causes hide from one whose breast
Is, as thou know'st, of trust? blush not, but speak the rest.”

XCI.

Her bosom heaved with a tumultuous swell,
And from her lips the trembling accents came
Abrupt and prefaced by a sigh; “Farewell
Ill-timed reserve and unavailing shame!
It is in vain—I am no more the same—
In vain concealed and close you strive to hide
Love's glowing fires beneath your specious flame!
Due were such scruples ere I stept aside;
But now a wandering maid, farewell the' imperfect pride!

XCII.

"My loss," she added, "on that night of grief,
 When my poor country yielded to her foes,
 Surpassed the' appearance; not that then my chief
 Misfortune happened, but from thence it rose.
 My sceptre lost, my realms subdued, were woes
 Easy to bear, resigned with little cost;
 But with my high estate, my heart's repose
 Was also gone; ah me! what folly crost
 My brain? then sense was wrecked, and peace for ever lost!

XCIII.

"Thou know'st, Vafrine, with what a trembling awe,
 Seeing such slaughter and foul spoil, I sped
 To thy kind lord and mine, when first I saw
 Armed in my halls the warrior fix his tread;
 Thou know'st with what an agony of dread
 His knees I grasped, and of his conquering glaive
 Prayed strong protection: 'Mercy, Prince,' I said,
 'I pray not for my life, but save, oh save
 My virgin flower unstained! 't is all I come to crave.'

XCIV.

"He waited not to hear my finished plea,
 But took my hand in his, and said, 'Arise!
 Fear not, fair maiden! I myself will be
 Thy sure defence; cloud not those charming eyes!'
 Ah, then I felt, with a divine surprise,
 I know not what strange sweetness seize my frame!
 Which by degrees, in gratitude's disguise,
 Securely creeping through my soul, became,
 Ere well I wist, a wound, a sickness, and a flame.

XCV.

"He visited me oft, he saw me grieve,
 And with mild accents would my woes allay;
 'Thy perfect liberty,' he said, 'receive;
 Take back thy treasures, and be cheered, I pray.'
 Ah, this was cruelty, not kindness! gay
 I could not be, when whilst he drew the dart,
 He rudely snatched me from myself away;
 These he restored to me, the cheaper part,
 But in restoring played the tyrant o'er my heart.

XCVI.

" Love's hard to hide ; with thee I oft apart
Asked of my lord in garden, hall, and grove ;
Thou the strong workings of my mind and heart
Perceiving, saidst, ' Erminia, thou 'rt in love !'
This I denied—can maids do less ? and strove
To dissipate the' idea ; but my sighs
Too well sufficed the assertion to disprove ;
And whilst my tongue was mute, perchance my eyes
Shone with the' impassioned warmth I studied to disguise.

XCVII.

" Unhappy silence ! had I then but sought
The fitting medicine for my wounds, I ne'er
Had loosed my wishes on a fancy fraught
With no relief, nor fled I know not where.
I left him, hiding in my breast with care
The flame I nursed ;—what tongue my pangs can paint ?
For death alone I looked ; till with despair
Love in my succour strove, and in the' attainment,
Loosed me from every tie of feminine restraint.

XCVIII.

" So that to seek my lord I went, that he
Might cure the lingering sickness he had made ;
But on my moonbright way, I chanced to be,
By villains, ambushed in the greenwood shade,
Chased and assaulted ; scarce could I evade
Their savage grasp, so hotly they pursued ;
To a lone cell at length my palfrey strayed,
And there I dwelt in genial solitude,
A simple shepherd-girl, a tenant of the wood.

XCIX.

" But when that fond desire which sore dismay
Had for awhile suppressed, revived again,
Daring the same adventure, on my way
The same misfortune met with me as then ;
Nor could I now escape ; for in the glen
The lurking freebooters were close at hand ;
Thus was I chased and quickly seized,—the men
Were, I soon gathered, an Egyptian band,
Who straight for Gaza made, swift journeying o'er the sand.

C.

"They took me to their Chief, whose ear my prayer
And mournful story so completely gained,
That he mine honour did respect, and there
With kind Armida have I since remained.
Thus oft have I been harshly entertained ;
Thus oft have I escaped ; ah see, Vafrine,
What scenes I have passed through, what ills sustained !
Yet free, yet captured oft as I have been,
Still my first chains I wear, preserved through every scene.

CI.

"Ah, let not him who round my soul entwined
The chains from which no power can set me free,
Let him not say, 'Go, vagrant maid, and find
Some other home, thou shalt not stay with me,'—
But kind and dear may my reception be !
'Take back,' Vafrino ! to thy master say,
'This trembling dove, and treat her tenderly !' "
Thus spake the Princess ; and thus, night and day,
They side by side rode on, and talked the time away.

CII.

The beaten road Vafrino left erewhile,
Seeking a shorter or securer way ;
They reached at length, what time with farewell smile
The sun hung hovering o'er the landscape gray,
Near to the town, a vale of pine and bay ;
Sprinkled with crimson was the green ; and nigh,
Groveling in blood, a lifeless warrior lay
Across the path ; though dead, his Gorgon eye
Yet seemed to menace death, upstaring on the sky.

CIII.

The fashion of his arms and foreign mien
Spoke him a Pagan ; on Vafrino sped,
And somewhat farther on the encircled green,
As to the right he chanced to turn his head,
Perceived a second : "This," he inly said,
"Must surely be a Christian, by the grain
Of his dark vest ;" he sees the Cross of Red,
Leaps from his steed, the face discovers plain,
And, "O my God !" he cried, "here lies Prince Tancred
slain."

CIV.

The pitying Princess had paused to gaze
On the grim form of the Circassian peer,
When that sad voice of anguish and amaze
Came like an arrow on her heart and ear;
At Tancred's name, she spurred like one whom fear
Or wine had rendered mad, her palfrey fleet;
And when she saw indeed the form so dear,
Pale, and wrapt round as with the winding-sheet
Of death, she stept not, no, she darted from her seat!¹⁸

CV.

And, with a bursting groan, a stormy shower
Of tears, low bending o'er the' unconscious knight,
"Fortune," she cried, "in what ill-omened hour
Bring'st thou me here? O dire, O fatal sight!
Long wished, long sought for, is it in this plight
I find and view thee, oh my love! laced o'er
With wounds, and all unable to requite
With one kind look the bitter complaints I pour?
No sooner found again, than lost for evermore!

CVI.

"Ah! never did I dream that to these eyes
Thou could'st be aught, love, but a pleasing care!
Would they were dark, no more this blank disguise
Of thy dear face to mark, which ill they dare.
Where is its once expressive smile? ah where
The mildness beaming from the eye? the cheek's
Divine carnations, and the brow that bare
Itself so bravely?—not a feature speaks,—
Gone! beyond reach, alas, of groans, or tears, or shrieks!

CVII.

"But, though thus pale and dim, thou charm'st me still;
Fair soul! if yet thou light'st this seeming clay,
Yet hear'st my complaints, forgive my daring will
And too rash ardour the fond theft which they
Tempt me to take,—forgive me if I lay
To thine my virgin lips, and one cold kiss
Steal from the dull caresses of decay!
Warmer I looked for, but 't will be some bliss
To seize in death's despite, and die remembering this.

CVIII.

"Receive my soul, which flutters to be free,
And thither guide it where thine own is fled!"
Groaning she spoke, and weeping seemed to be
Apace dissolving with the tears she shed.
Bathed by this quickening balm, as from the dead,
The knight revived, and opened for a space
His languid lips,—dark slumber still o'erspread
His heavy eyes, but as she kissed his face,
One blending sigh from him repaid her blest embrace.

CIX.

A gleam of hope, at his reviving breath,
Cheered the sad maid: "Look up, dear love," she cried,
"On the last melancholy rites of death
Which I with pious tears and sighs provide!
Look on me, Tancred, a funereal bride,
Fain in companionship with thee to take
The long dark path and perish at thy side!
Fly not, fly not so soon, for pity's sake,
'Tis the last boon I ask, the last request I make."

CX.

Tancred his eyes unclosed, and closed again,
Heavy and dim; and she renewed her plaint;
"This," said Vafrine, "soothes not the hero's pain,
First cure the wounded, then bewail the' attain't."
He strips him of his arms; Erminia, faint
And trembling, aids him as she can, applies
Her skilful hand, like a ministrant saint,
To search his wounds, and with experienced eyes,
Symptoms of hopeful show, rejoicingly describes.

CXI.

By loss of blood and faintness she perceives
The trance is caused, and by the chill night wind;
But in this lonely wilderness of leaves
Nought save her veil occurs, his wounds to bind:
But Love romantic bandages can find,
And dictate arts of pity strange and sweet,—
For with her radiant tresses, disentwined,
She stanch'd the flowing blood, (divine conceit!)
And swathed the grisly wounds that so acutely beat;—

CXII.

Severing the tresses with his sword; for ill
Her thin short veil the' occasion could suffice;
Nor sage nor crocus, dittany nor dill
Found she at hand; but charms of equal price
She knew, she used, and from his weary eyes
That deadly sleep already shakes away;
Lightly he lifts them, and with glad surprise
Beholds his servant, and, in strange array,
The maid who o'er him hangs with such benign dismay.

CXIII.

"How com'st thou here, Vafrino?" soft he said,
"And thou, my kind physician! who art thou?"
She wept, she blushed, rejoicing, rosy-red,
She sighed, she smiled, she felt she wist not how.
"Thou shalt know all, prince," she replied, "but now
(Thus thy physician bids) be still and rest;
Health shall return to thy bewildered brow,
Prepare the guerdon that shall make me blest;"
And then his head she placed upon her beauteous breast.

CXIV.

Vafrino mused how he might best, ere night,
Remove the warrior from the bosky glen,
When lo! a band of soldiers came in sight,
Whom soon he noted for Lord Tancred's men;
They on the tower were fighting round him, when
He met the fierce Circassian, blade to blade,
And in appeal of battle dared him; then
Bade not to follow, they the prince obeyed,
But anxious sought him now, so long the hero stayed.

CXV.

Numbers beside pursued the search, but these
Alone had the good chance their wish to gain;
Their arms they join, whereon with perfect ease
To all, the wounded hero they sustain:
"Shall then Argantes," said the knight, "remain,
Brave as he was, the prey of wild birds? no!
Leave not the hero; bear him from the plain;
His gallant relics shall not feed the crow,
Nor want such praise or tomb as Tancred can bestow!

CXVI.

"I war not with the pale dumb corse,—he died
Bold as a lion on the hunter's spear;
Funereal rites 't is fit that we provide,
The last poor honours that can serve him here."
He said; his troops construct a simple bier,
And thus in solemn march behind him bear
His slaughtered foe; Vafrino in the rear,
His station takes beside the enamoured fair,
And tends her o'er the downs with all a page's care.

CXVII.

"Not home," said Tancred, "to my wonted tent,
But bear, O bear me to the sacred Town!
That if cut short by human accident,
I there may lay my feverish being down:
Haply a spot of such revered renown
Where died the Lamb of God, may make my way
To heaven more easy; and 't will be the crown
Of all my toils, with life's declining ray,
Low at his worshipped shrine my pilgrim vows to pay!"

CXVIII.

He said, and thither was he borne, and laid
On a soft bed, and in a calm repose
Was soon entranced; Vafrino for the maid
A near apartment close and secret chose;
And, leaving her to cheer her amorous woes
With kindling hope's serene perspective, went
Where Godfrey sojourned, unforbid by those
Who there kept guard, though then in crowded tent
On the next stroke of war his dubious thoughts were bent.

CXIX.

Beside the bed whence Raymond scarce uprears
His yet enfeebled frame, the Duke was found;
By a brave garland of his noble peers,
And of his wisest counsellors compassed round:
The Squire his tale begins, and a profound
Regard is marked on each beholder's mien;
None interrupts him: "Sire," he says, "renowned
Through the wide world! at thy desire I've been
Amidst the Egyptian tents, and all their forces seen.

CXX.

" But fancy not that of the mighty host
The countless swarms can be by me ared ;
I saw the hills, and plains, and valleys lost,
E'en as I looked, beneath their darkening tread ;
I saw, where'er they came, where'er they spread,
Rich earth despoiled of all her grass and grain,
And the flood shrink in its exhausted bed ;
Not Jordan's stream, nor Syria's wide champain
Can e'er, methinks, suffice, such myriads to sustain.

CXXI.

" But of their horse and of their foot by far
The greater part are merely useless shows ;
Troops that no signals use nor arts of war,
But at a distance fight with slings and bows ;
Yet are there some choice warriors who compose
The Persian host, well mailed, with sword in hand,
And helmets on their heads ; but chiefly those
Illustrious myrmidons my praise demand,
Who guard the' imperial flag, the king's Immortal Band.

CXXII.

" Immortal called, for when a soldier's lost,
Its number not diminishes ; the knight
Next in renown fills up the vacant post,
As though succeeding to his comrade's right ;
The Captain, Emireno named, for might
In deeds of arms and wisdom in divan,
Has but few peers ; his orders are, despite
Thy utmost phlegm, by all the arts he can,
Into a general fight to force thee or trepan.

CXXIII.

" Nor can the army its approach retard
Beyond the second day, for 't is on fire
To act,—look well, Rinaldo, then to guard
Thy head, 'gainst which so many knights conspire :
The most renowned have whet their swords in ire,
And pledged their honour on the dreadful deed ;
Whilst, yet the more to raise incensed desire,
Herself Armida promises in meed
Of him who or by guile or prowess shall succeed.

CXXIV.

" Chief of the warriors who have sworn thy death
Is Altamore, the king of Samarcand ;
Adrastus too, whose realms are by the breath
Of young Aurora at her rising fanned ;
As big and bold a giant as e'er spanned
A sword in battle ; so unlike his kind,
His reins a monstrous elephant command ;
And Tisapherne, to whom, of milder mind,
The sovereign palm of worth and prowess is assigned."

CXXV.

This heard, Rinaldo's soul was all ablaze,
His eyes with generous indignation fill,
He burns to rush amidst his foes, he lays
Hand on his sword, nor stands a moment still.
" This," said Vafrine, " is one impending ill,
But their chief plot, the crowning stroke of all,
Remains to be disclosed ; their utmost skill
In arms, their guile, their hatred, and their gall,
Will be employed to work thine own determined fall."

CXXVI.

He then proceeded, part by part, to' unveil
The latent risk, the meditated fraud,
The poisoned arms, devices, shirts of mail,
The vaunt, the promise, and designed reward.
Much was inquired, much answered ; all applaud
The spy's quick genius and accomplished vow :
Silence ensued ; until the chief, unawed
By the near danger, raised his tranquil brow,
And to Count Raymond said, " What counsel offerest thou?"

CXXVII.

" Not as was fixed," he said, " at rise of sun
To press our foes, but, more to their chagrin,
The tower so strictly to besiege, that none
May at his pleasure or pass out or in ;
Meanwhile refresh our forces, which begin
To need the respite ; strengthened thus with rest,
The last great battle we may hope to win ;
But judge thyself at leisure if 't were best,
Boldly, or here at bay the battle to contest."

CXXVIII.

"But, above all things, of thyself besure
Take every care, as 'tis through thee, they own,
Our armies conquer; who can else secure
The field, and Europe o'er the East enthroned?
And that the traitors may be clearly known,
Change the devices of thy guardian band;
So shall the villains for their crime atone,
Caught in the very scheme themselves have planned,
And thou be still preserved, our armies to command."

CXXIX.

"As is thy wont," the pious Chief replied,
"Thy kind regard and wisdom dost thou shew;
But what thou leav'st unfixed, I now decide—
We will march forth against the haughty foe.
Shall armies, recent from the overthrow
Of the proud East, from tower or rampart fight,
When too by such foul guile insulted? No!
Our well-proved swords the traitors shall requite
Both in the open field and all-beholding light!"

CXXX.

"Neither the rumour of our conquered spoils
Shall they sustain; nor, when in frowns revealed,
The victor's aspect, or his arms; our toils
Are crowned; and in their fall our empire's sealed:
The tower, their last lorn confidence, shall yield,
Or, unrelieved of any, be possessed,
When the first engine to its walls is wheeled!"
Here ceased the high-souled Chief, for down the west
The glittering stars declined, and called them to their rest.

END OF CANTO XIX.



JERUSALEM DELIVERED.

CANTO XX.





Stanza xxvii.

ARGUMENT.

- THE host arrives, and with the Christian power
Joins in fell battle ; Solyman disdains
To be coop'd up in the blockaded tower,
And sallies out, to war upon the plains ;
With him the king in blood his sabre stains ;
Both fall by noble hands : the godlike boy
Soothes his forlorn Armida ; daylight wanes,
But the flushed Croises all their foes destroy,
And to the long-sought shrine proceed with duteous joy.

JERUSALEM DELIVERED.

CANTO XX.

I.

THE sun was risen, the dial's circling shade
Had the tenth hour of morn already passed,
When, as the Pagans on their tower surveyed
The plains, a gloom the' horizon overcast,
Dark as the cloud which at grey evening fast
Involves the silent world : and now they knew
It was indeed the Egyptian camp, at last
Come to their aid ; such clouds of dust upflew,
And shut the heavens, and hills, and valleys from their
view.

II.

Then from the citadel to heaven they raise
A general shout, a hoarse discordant cry,
Like that of cranes, when now from wintry Thrace
The mustering swarms their busy pinions ply,
And through the clouds to a serener sky
In clangour scud before the freezing gale ;
The long-wished succour lifts their ardour high,
So that already from their marble pale
Prompt is each hand to shoot, each glorying tongue to rail.

III.

The Franks, conjecturing whence this sudden glow
Of joy and fury had its impulse, hied
To a commanding station, whence the foe
In all his pomp of numbers was descried ;
A generous ardour fires their hearts ; they chide
The lingering hours, the war-cry they resound ;
Whilst the flushed youth below, on every side,
With martial murmurs hem the Captain round ;
And, " Bid, O bid," they cry, " the tuneful trumpet sound."

IV.

But till the morrow he denies their prayer,
And wisely tempers their audacious heat;
No flying skirmish will he wage, nor care
For an engagement short of full defeat.
“Anon, brave youths!” he answered, “but ’tis meet
That with one day of respite you requite
Your recent labours; rest you, I entreat;
Perhaps this truce may in our foes excite
A rash contempt of us, presumptuous in their might.”

V.

All stood prepared, and through the long, long night,
Expectant pined for morn’s returning ray;
Ne’er did the blue sky shew so clear and bright,
As in the dawning of that noted day;
Aurora smiled, and seemed in her array
Of purple radiance with the sun to vie;
Her amethystine crown she shakes away,
All becomes gold; and, without film, the sky
On great and godlike deeds opes slow its glorious Eye.

VI.

Soon as he saw the golden morning spring,
Godfrey led forth his marshalled hosts: behind,
Care of the tower in which the Syrian king
Was cooped, to Raymond’s prowess was assigned;
Who with his own Provençal knights combined
The numerous band of Christians late enrolled
In their deliverers’ ranks, at Emmaus joined;
Nor these alone were left to guard the hold,
But a renowned brigade of Gascons brave and bold.

VII.

From the Chief’s spirits, of his men admired,
The total host on victory presumes:
Heaven sends him grace; wherewith, like one inspired,
A nobler air and grandeur he assumes:
His face the rosy light of youth relumes,
Where imaged honour shines like dews in spring;
Glowes his rich hauberk, dance his soldier plumes,
And, as his eye smiles, as his limbs take wing,
He in the sunshine looks like some celestial thing.

VIII.

But far he had not marched, ere in advance
The whole Egyptian army he descried ;
He straight secured a hill which 't was his chance
To find outspread on his sinister side,
And rear ; this seized, upon the champain, wide
In front, but narrow in the wings, his ranks
He spreads abroad ; the foot, well fortified,
He forms his centre, and the centre flanks
With light-horse wings, composed of Flemings and of
Franks.

IX.

In the left wing, to which the shelving hill,
Held by his guardian chivalry, declined,
He the two Roberts placed, to Baldwin's skill
And wise command the centre he assigned ;
Himself the right wing held, where unconfined
The plains stretched out upon the beams of noon ;
For there the' Egyptian, if he felt inclined,
Might, by the' advancing of his armed moon,
Hope with most sure success to' enclose the whole platoon.

X.

Here his own noble Lorrainers he fixed,
With many a choice and many a well-armed knight ;
And with his archer-horsemen intermixt
Footmen well used amid their ranks to fight.
Last, of the' Adventurers, men of noble might,
And the culled flower of every Christian land,
He forms a squadron, stationed to the right
Somewhat apart, and to Rinaldo's hand
Commits the sacred charge of this illustrious band.

XI.

To whom the Duke : "On thy courageous mind
The final issues of the field depend ;
Keep thou thy squadron close concealed, behind
These spreading wings that to such length extend ;
And when the Egyptian troops draw nigh to blend
In stubborn fight, assail them ; give not ground,
But render vain the project they intend ;
Which is, if I mistake not, to wheel round,
And turn the wings ; be bold, and evermore renowned !"

XII.

Then on his steed he like the lightning flew
From horse to foot, from ranging band to band,
Flung up his vizor, gave his face to view,—
Lighten his eyes, and waves his armed hand ;
He cheers the doubtful ; with sublime demand
Confirms the ardent ; to the bold recites
The vaunts they made, the wondrous feats they planned ;
With praise of valour past the brave delights ;
And these with views of gold, with honour those incites.

XIII.

At length he paused, where in a gallant line
Are ranged his best and noblest chevaliers ;
And from a spot which favours the design,
Begins a speech which fires each soul that hears.
As when the frigid winter melts to tears,
From Alpine peaks, fed with dissolving snows,
The swift, smooth torrent sparkingly careers,
So full, so fluent, as his fancy glows,
From his persuasive lips the sounding period flows.

XIV.

“ O my brave knights, of chivalry the flower !
My scourge, my tamers of the Orient ! lo,
The final day ; behold at length the hour
For which so warmly you were wont to glow !
Not without cause does Heaven its rebels shew
Drawn to one centre ; not without high cause
Guides them to us ; is not your every foe
Brought here, like stags into the lion's paws,
That you may end at once ten thousand mortal wars ?

XV.

“ In one, unnumbered victories will be wrought,
Nor shall the risk nor the fatigue be more ;
Take not, O take not then a single thought
On the vast swarms that cloud the landscape o'er ;
For, with themselves at discord, they deplore
Their ill conjunction ; in their ranks e'en art
Confounds itself ; and those who fight will gore
Themselves, or form by far the smaller part,
Thousands will want the room, and thousands more the
heart !

XVI.

"Half the vast swarms you view, are naked slaves;
Men void of strength or skill, in helpless plight;
Called from the couch or field, from chains or caves,
And dragged to battle in their own despite:
E'en now, in terror of the coming fight,
Their drawn swords quiver, shake their shields; I see
The ensigns tremble in their hands! those light
Uncertain sounds are no sealed signs to me,—
Fear guides their wavering march; Death sounds their
Lillallié!

XVII.

"That Chief, who, robed in gold and purple weed,
Ranges their bands, and seems so fierce to view,
The Moor and Arab in his chains may lead,
But never can resist such knights as you;
What, although wise, though prudent, will he do,
When his disordered troops in battle close?
Ill known he is, or only known to few;
Nor well his warriors, none by name he knows;
What can he do, brave souls, when thick the tumult grows?

XVIII.

"But I am Captain of a chosen host,
We fight at once and conquer, side by side;
You serve from choice, and I the knowledge boast
Of each one's country, lineage, lands, and bride.
What noble sword can strike, what javelin glide,
That is to me unknown? yea, at a glance,
As the shaft passes, can I not decide
Whether the same of Ireland were or France,
And whose the sinewy arm that made the bowstring dance?

XIX.

"'T is no great thing I ask; let me but find
Each one considerate of his old renown;
Use but your wonted zeal, and keep in mind
Your honour, mine, and His who bore the crown
Of thorns on his pale forehead; go, strike down
His scornful foes, and on their cancelled creed
Stablish your conquest of the sacred town!
Enough, why argue? in your eyes I read
Victory already won,—the Sepulchre is freed!"

XX.

At the conclusion of this speech, a fire
Was seen to fall of clear and golden light,
Like a descending star or gliding fire
Shook from the blue skirts of a summer night,
Save that 't was far more beautiful and bright,—
A shower as from the sun's most lucid spring,
Wove to a garland glorious to the sight,
Which round his temples passed its golden ring;
And thus, as some divined, marked out their future king.

XXI.

Perchance, if tongue of mortal may aspire
To mortal sight Heaven's secrets to dispread,
A guardian Angel from the blissful quire,
With radiant wings involved his sacred head.
Whilst Godfrey thus his troops exhorting led,
And in these terms provoked their martial pride,
The' Egyptian Chief was not less active, fed
With equal hopes of victory, to ride
Amid his marshalled men, and cheer their souls untried.

XXII.

He led abroad his sumless squadrons, soon
As his keen eye discerned the' advancing Franks;
And lined, in form of an extensive moon,
With foot his centre, and with horse his flanks;
Himself the right commands, the left with thanks
The generous Altamore receives; between,
The central foot proud Muleasses ranks;
And in the midst, with anger in her mien,
Shines, like a glorious star, the beauteous Damascene.

XXIII.

With Tisaphernes and the' Immortal band,
Frowns on the right the savage King of Ind;
But on the left wing where the plains expand
In scope, for swift manœuvres well designed,
The Persian kings has Altamore combined,
With those of Libya and the two whose sway
Is o'er the burning sands where scarce a wind
Breaks the hot noon; and there, in grim array,
The slings, and bearded shafts, and twanging crossbows
play.

XXIV.

Thus Emireno ranks his troops; with speed
Gallops from wing to wing, from van to rear;
Speaks by interpreters or not, as need
Requires; with praises mixes threats severe,
Pains with rewards, and with loud chiding, cheer;
To some he shouts; "Why now, my darlings! why
Your downcast faces? what is there to fear?
What can these do against your thousands? fie!
Our shouts, our very shades will make the cravens fly!"

XXV.

To some; "O yes! with that revengeful face
Come, and like vultures your lost spoils regain!"
To some, sad fancies clear as truth portrays,
And prints the' imagined picture on the brain:
Paints their lamenting country; paints the pain
Of their sad families; the moving pleas
They use; the hands they wring; the robes they strain;
"Think," he exclaims, "that on her bended knees
Your country speaks through me! ah, think her accents
these!"

XXVI.

"Guard well my laws; let not my blood descend
To bathe my mosques, or stain their golden spires;
The tombs and ashes of my dead, defend,
Save my chaste maids from their accurst desires.
Sad for their by-gone youth, to you my sires
Shew each his hoary and unshielded head;
To you my women, mindful of your fires,
Bare their imploring breasts, with tears o'erspread,
Each mother points her babe, each wife her bridal bed!"

XXVII.

And to the rest; "Lo, Asia makes you here
The champions of her honour! claims from you
Upon these few base robbers a severe
And bitter vengeance, but most justly due!"
Thus he with various arguments anew
In various tongues each various nation charms
To the near war; but farewell words! adieu
Delay! the stirring trumpet sounds alarms;
Small grows the parting space; they grasp their angry arms.

XXVIII.

O, 't was a brave, a grand, and wondrous sight,
Ere front to front the marshalled hosts combined,
To mark how nobly in their ranks each knight
Burned to move on, and for the signal pined !
How the loose flags flew billowing on the wind ;
How on ten thousand heads the feathers danced ;
How robes, impresses, gems, and arms refined,
Of all rich colours, gold and steel, advanced
Before the flouted Sun, smiled, sparkled, flashed, and
glanced !

XXIX.

Like a tall forest of dark pines depressed
Both armies shew, so thick the spears abound ;
Drawn are the bows, the lances laid in rest,
Vibrate the darts, the glowing slings whirl round :
Each warring horse is on the wing to bound
Through the snuffed battle ; to the greeting gales
Spreads his broad nostrils, paws the echoing ground,
His lord's raised fury whets and countervails,
Foams, prances, snorts and neighs, and fire and smoke
exhales.

XXX.

Horror itself in that fair scene looks gay,
And joy springs up e'en in the midst of fear ;
Nor less the trumpet's organ-tones convey
Both bliss and terror to the gazer's ear.
But the Frank hosts, though less by far, appear
More brisk at heart and eager at the sight ;
Their every trumpet with a note more clear
And ardent, sounds its prelude to the fight,
And their coat-armour glows with a diviner light.

XXXI.

The Christian trumpets first defiance sound,
The Pagan gongs take up the tuneful gage ;
Kneel the rapt Franks, and kiss the sacred ground
With adoration and a holy rage ;
Then forward spring to war : the spacious stage
' Twixt the two hosts decreases—disappears
Beneath their rushing charge ; they meet—engage—
Shock the four wings ; each gallant footman hears
The clang,—they bound abroad, and van with van coheres !

XXXII.

What Christian dealt the first auspicious wound!
Who could that guerdon of renown attain?
'T was thou, Gildippe! thou, who to the ground
Smot'st the stout king of Ormus, great Hircane;
So vast a glory did high Heaven ordain
To woman's hands! brave as he was in show,
She pierced his breast and broke the spear in twain;
Transfixed he fell, and, falling, heard the foe
Raise a triumphant shout, and praise the glorious blow.

XXXIII.

Her lance thus snapt, she with her manly hand
Drew her good sword and on the Persians flew;
With frequent strokes, of their most serried band
Pierced the thick gloom, and let the sunlight through;
She cut forlorn Zopiro sheer in two,
E'en where the' adorning baldrick clasps the waist;
Then the fell savage grim Alarco slew,
Cleaving the porch of language and of taste;
Who from his charger fell, and spurned the sands he graced.

XXXIV.

A blow felled Artaxerxes, and a thrust
Argeo,—the one lay stunned, the other slain;
Then, smiting Ismael's wrist, she to the dust
Cast his left hand, which dropped the bridle rein;
The sword glanced hissing on the ears and mane
Of his proud-spirited and ardent bay,—
Which, startled by the sound, or stung with pain,
Checked by no curb, reared, turned, and plunged away
Through the whole Persian line, in dreadful disarray.

XXXV.

All these and numbers more, now lost to song,
She slew, or wounded; their disordered squares
The Persians close, and charge her in a throng,
Eager to win the precious arms she wears;
But now her faithful lord, who half despairs
For her endangered safety, light as wind
Flies to her succour, and his falchion bares;
And the blest pair, together thus combined,
In their united swords united vigour find.

XXXVI.

Arts of defence their generous souls are seen
To use, unpractised and unheard of yet;
He shelters her, she him; and in this keen
Dispute of love, themselves they quite forget;
The ardent heroine, though herself beset,
Beats off the weapons that her lord molest;
He to the spears which her dear person threat,
Is quick to raise his shield, and would be blest
No less, if need require, to' oppose his naked breast.

XXXVII.

Each to the other thus his cares transferred,
And each the other's wrongs revenged; his blade
Slew the presumptuous Artabane, whose word
The trembling isle of Böecan obeyed;
And lifeless stretched the haughty renegade,
Alvante, who with hand audacious strove
To smite his darling: she the debt repaid;
For at her lord as Arimantes drove,
His brows from eye to eye the' indignant heroine clove.

XXXVIII.

Such deeds they did, but greater was the wrack
Wrought by Prince Altamore; where'er he plied
His fearful sword, or spurred to the attack
His haughty steed, he slew or beat aside
Both horse and foot; thrice blest was he who died
At the first stroke, nor groaned beneath the tread
Of his fierce steed; for whom the homicide
Beat down, the cruel creature in his stead
Tore with its gnashing teeth, or proudly trampled dead.

XXXIX.

By the strong Prince's battle-axe were slain
Brunello sinewy and Ardonio great;
Of that the helm and head he clove in twain,
So that each shoulder dropped beneath its weight,
Ere fell the corse; but 't was Ardonio's fate
Through the quick spleen to be transfixed, where rise
The nerves whose strings with mirth the heart dilate;
So that (a strange and horrid sight!), he lies
Jocund with mortal pain, and loudly laughing dies.

XL.

Nor these alone from each delightful tie
Of life and love his murdering weapon tore,
But good Rosmondo and Gentonio, Guy
And Guasco, all lie weltering in their gore.
Who can relate what numbers Altamore
Beat down, what numbers bade the world farewell,
Crushed by his charger on the sandy floor ;
The names of all the slaughtered who can tell,
How the brave warrior smote, or how the' assaulted fell!

XLI.

There lives not one who with the warrior now
Will break a spear, or meet him face to face ;
Alone Gildippe braves him to his brow,
Nor in the battle to his arm gives place.
Never did Amazon, in stormy Thrace,
When red with blood the swift Thermodon ran,
Brandish her pole-axe or her shield embrace
Dauntless as she, when, issuant from the van,
She rushed to check the pride of this tremendous man.

XLII.

She smote him where with gold and rich aumaille
Gay on the helm flamed his barbaric crown ;
And, shivering it to atoms, made him veil
His haughty head, and bow benignly down ;
Well judged the monarch that no mean renown
Graced the bold arm that with such reckless might
Enforced its will, and, knitting to a frown
His swarthy brows, rushed forward to requite
Shame with incensed disdain, and with revenge despite.

XLIII.

And in an instant on her basnet served
The gentle Lady with a stroke so sore,
As to deprive her of all sense ; unnerved,
Entranced she sunk,—but her fond lord upbore,
And, were it their good Genius that watched o'er
Their forfeit lives, or magnanimity
In him, the check sufficed—he struck no more ;
Like the mild lion, that with generous eye
Upon his prostrate foe just glares, and passes by.

XLIV.

Meanwhile Ormondo, to whose impious hands
The purposed treason was consigned, alipt in
With his false mates amid the Christian bands,
Eager to perpetrate the' unfinished sin ;
Like midnight wolves, that smoothing their fierce grin
To a meek innocence, assume the guise
Of shepherds' dogs, the wattled sheepfolds win
Through the dusk mist, and there, with sparkling eyes,
Prowl round, their dubious tails upcurled betwixt their
thighs.

XLV.

Mute they advance, and now with closed ventayle
The bloody Pagan draws to Godfrey's side ;
But when, considerate of Vafreno's tale,
Their forged devices, white and gold, he spied ;
" Lo, the masked villains ! lo, my friends," he cried,
" The wretch that creeps with such a stealthy tread
In Frank disguisements near us ! round their guide
See how his ruffians make to me !" this said,
He on the traitor rushed, and cloved his helmed head.

XLVI.

For the confronted felon, quite amazed,
Nor struck, nor fenced, nor offered to be gone ;
But e'en as though the Gorgon on him gazed,
Sate like an ancient warrior froze to stone :
On them all swords were drawn, all darts were thrown,
And to its last inevitable cane
Each quiver emptied was on them alone ;
Thus fell, thus died Ormondo and his train,
To such small pieces cleft, their corpses scarce remain.

XLVII.

Godfrey, when once he saw himself imbrued
In Pagan blood, no longer stood at bay,
But quickly flew to where the Persian hewed
Through the thick squadrons his triumphant way ;
So that his knights now fled in disarray,
Swift as the sands in Libya's drifting waste,
Before the stormy South ; their sore dismay
He checked with shouts, rebuked their flying haste,
And, staying those that fled, assailed the Prince who chased.

XLVIII.

The two stern Chiefs a battle here began,
Such as was never in poetic page
Emblazed, the whilst on foot good Baldwin ran
With Muleasses elsewhere to engage;
Nor with less fervour, nor with less wild rage
Mix the bold horsemen on the left, where green
The sloping hills scoop out a spacious stage;
In person there, his two brave knights between,
Fights the barbaric Chief, high-minded Emirene.

XLIX.

With him the Norman Robert joins,—they fight
With equal valour; but the *Fleming's* mail
The grim Adrastus bores and shatters quite,
And with sharp sabre cleaves his barred ventayle.
No certain foe has Tisapherne to' assail,
That in close battle can be termed his peer;
But on he scours, as with the driving gale,
Where most impassive the wedged ranks appear,
And all is hideous death before his winged career.

L.

Thus fought they long, and still their hope and cheer
In equal balance hung with doubt and dread;
With shattered mails, split shields, the shivered spear
And cloven helm, was all the field o'erspread;
In bosoms gashed or bowels gored, the red
Revening sword lies buried deep, or bright
In thousand fragments glitters round the dead;
Some lie supine, some grovelling, and in spite
Seem still the hated earth ferociously to bite.

LI.

Beside his lord the charger lies outspread;
The comrade lifeless by his comrade lies;
Foe beside foe; the living on the dead;
And on the vanquished oft the victor dies:
No silent lull is there, nor formal cries,
But a hoarse, indistinct, unceasing sound,—
Roarings of fury, threats of anger, sighs
Of languid Sorrow, wailing o'er his wound,
And groans and rising shrieks in faint low moanings
drowned.

LII.

The arms which lately wore so bright an air,
Discoloured now, and dull, and frightful shew;
The steel has lost its sheen, the gold its glare,
Each sparkling colour takes the tint of woe:
Past is the pomp, the glory, and the glow
Of scimitar, and sash, and dancing plume;
Turban and gem alike are trampled low,
And dust lies thick upon the blood whose bloom
Outvied in dire display the purple of the loom.

LIII.

The Moors, the Ethiops, and the Arabs then,
To the dull discord of the atabal,
Spread out their dusky skirts of moving men,
And on the dexter wing revolving fall;
Already with their bows and slings they gall
The army from afar, when, like the din
Of earthquake and of thunder, at the call
Of young Rinaldo, his bold knights begin
With shouts their rushing march, and hem the assailants in.

LIV.

The first he met was Asimire, who led
The Moors of Merœ, an illustrious name;
Rinaldo smote him where the swarthy head
Towers on the neck, and shore it from the frame;
And when this taste of victory and of fame
Had whet his angry appetite, the youth
So nobly bore him in the bloody game,
That to relate his deeds would be in sooth
To give mute wonder wing, and wed romance to truth.

LV.

More deaths than blows he deals, yet momentarily
His falchion smites; and as the angry snake
Seems in its single tongue to vibrate three,
With such a fearful swiftness does it shake,
So in dismay these charged barbarians take
The single sword which furiously the knight
Whirls round, for three; its rapid motions make
The first illusion to the trusting sight,
And awe the portent seals in superstitious fright.

LVI.

Down, down to Tophet, fast the Negro kings
And Ethiopic tyrants bleeding go ;
Each gallant comrade in his footstep springs,
Upon the rest,—with rival zeal they glow :
The Pagan multitudes to earth they mow
With terrible contempt; and these prepare
No vain defence, but die without a blow ;
A massacre it is, no conflict, where
They yield up here their swords, present their bosoms there.

LVII.

Yet long they stand not to receive their wounds
In noble parts, but scour away—away ;
Fear spurs them on, despair their ranks confounds,
Lost is all art, relaxed their fair array ;
But the flushed hero still pursues his prey,
Strikes down their standards, breaks their strong crossbows,
Till spent in utter rout their powers decay ;
He then returns, for on defenceless foes
His fiery soul relents, his zeal less fiercely glows.

LVIII.

As the strong wind tenfold its rage augments
When hills or sturdy woods its blasts oppose,
But o'er the ample plain at once relents,
And in soft murmurs more serenely blows,—
As on the rock the dashing ocean throws
Its rough, its roaring billows, and boils high,
But in the open main more gently flows,
Rinaldo so, thus unopposed, lays by
Much of his noble rage, and calms his angry eye.

LIX.

Then, on the backs of this defenceless force
Scorning to spend his generous wrath in vain,
He to the infantry directs his course,
Late flanked by Asimire and Artabane,
Arab and dusky African ; now plain
It stood and naked, for the tribes that well
Might have defended it, were dispersed or slain ;
Crosswise he came, and on their flank, in selle,
With all his men-at-arms in sworded fury fell.

LX.

He snapt their bristling spears, the ranks they form
He clove in twain, and in their pierced array
Plunged, beating down their troops; the windy storm
Whirls the reaped harvests with less ease away.
On every side around him does he lay
A bloody pavement, pebbled thick with lance,
Shield, and lopt limb; along whose broad highway,
The following horse, for Palestine and France,
Uncurbed, with battering hoofs in gorgeous frenzy prance.

LXI.

The Hero came where his forlorn Armide
In warlike pomp stood in her golden car,
Girt by a noble band, who for the meed
Of her sweet smile escort her through the war;
He by his armour known whilst yet afar,
Was viewed by her with eyes which from desire
And passion trembled like a sparkling star;
He changed but slightly; she, 'twixt love and ire,
From red to deadly pale, from frost to flushing fire.

LXII.

The Knight declined the chariot of the dame,
And like a man that would elsewhere bestow
His thoughts, passed on; but her sworn knights for shame
Let not their rival scape without a blow;
One drew his crooked sabre, one couched low
His lance, his arbalist another bent;
Herself an arrow planted in her bow,
Scorn strung her hand, and nerved her fierce intent,
But love the mood appeased, nor yet the shaft was sent.

LXIII.

Love against anger rose, and their dispute
Proved that her flame still glowed, though hid from view;
Three times her arms she stretched abroad to shoot,
Three times took aim, and thrice her aim withdrew;
Disdain at length prevailed: again the yew
She with an eager and unshrinking arm
Bent, and the bowstring twanged; the shaft outflew,—
Out flew the shaft, but with the shaft this charm
She the next moment breathed; "God grant it do no harm!"

LXIV.

She would have bade the weapon turn again,
And smite the heart whose sternness she resents;
O, well indeed she must have loved him, when
In hate's last pass her soul so soon relents!
But straight again her fondness she repents,
Straight to her stormy heart fresh furies rise;
Thus she the shaft now joys in, now laments,
She will, she will not it should smite, and eyes
With a tumultuous heart the arrow as it flies.

LXV.

Not quite in vain was it discharged; the reed
Smote the young knight's hard coat of mail, too hard
In fact, for female weapons to succeed,—
The steel, instead of piercing it, was jarred
Itself to shivers, nor the silver marred;
He turned away,—she thought in scorn, and ground
Her teeth with anger at his disregard;
Ofttimes she shot, but still no entrance found
Her shafts, and while she shot love dealt her wound on
wound.

LXVI.

“What! is he then impassive, that he mocks
All hostile force!” she murmurs; “must he mail
His limbs in adamant like that which locks
His haughty spirit in its stubborn scale?
Against his heart nor glancing eyes prevail,
Nor weaponed knight, armed proof from top to toe;
Whilst I, alas! at all points foiled, bewail,
Armed or unarmed, alike or friend or foe,
My thousand arts despised, and droop my pennons low!

LXVII.

“Now what new art, what charm shall I essay;
In what new form can I myself present?
Wretch that I am, there is no hope! my day
Of rule is o'er, and all my forces spent!
My knights, where are they? 't is too evident
All power, all arms are weak to his; in vain
The spear is levelled, and the crossbow bent:”
Thus she repined; for now throughout the plain
She saw her champions pierced, beat down, dispersed, or
slain.

LXVIII.

Alone, she felt defenceless, stood in fear
To be enthralled or slain; nor can the aid
Of Dian or Minerva's arms—the spear
Or formidable bow, her heart persuade;
But as the delicate white swan, dismayed,
O'er which the eagle with fierce pounce impends,
Crouches to earth, and her broad wings displayed
Folds in mute terror,—to the storm she bends;
Just such her motions seem, just such wild looks she sends.

LXIX.

But brave Prince Altamore, whose might till now
Had held in check Gildippe, had upheld
The Persian flag when it began to bow,
And by his single arm the Franks repelled,
When in distress his Goddess he beheld,
Rushed, or flew rather from the near attack
To her; though honour at the step rebelled,
Him neither honour nor his host kept back;
So she but rescued be, the world may go to wrack!

LXX.

Round her ill-guarded car he planted spears,
And hewed an area with his falchion bright;
But meanwhile Godfrey and Rinaldo fierce
With dreadful slaughter put his troops to flight;
The hapless chief beheld their desperate plight,
And bore himself far better at the ken
As a fond lover than a warrior knight;
He placed in safety the fair Queen, and then
Returned untimely back to aid his vanquished men.

LXXI.

It was too late! those troops, like hunted deer,
Were gone beyond recall; no hope remained:
But on the left, the Christians with like fear
Fled from the Infidels, whose swords they stained;
One princely Robert scarce the ranks regained,
Wounded severely in the breast and face;
And one by grim Adrastus was constrained
To yield his sword; an almost equal pace
Both warring hosts thus kept in glory and disgrace.

LXXII.

A moment Godfrey takes to reunite
His straggling files, and then without delay
Renews the charge ; and thus in stubborn fight
Wings shock with wings in terrible array,
Victor with victor ; from their late assay
Tinged comes each soldier to the strife, in sheen
Of spoils from foes torn vauntingly away ;
Victory and honour from all parts convene ;
And Mars and dubious Fate unsmiling stand between.

LXXIII.

Whilst thus in furious rivalry of power
The Franks and Pagans stubbornly engage,
The fiery Soldan mounts the lofty tower,
And sees, though far remote, the war they wage ;
As on a theatre's illumined stage,
The sad sharp tragedy of human state
He sees,—their hot assaults of grief and rage,
The savage stabs of gladiatorial hate,
And all the thousand turns and accidents of fate.

LXXIV.

Awhile astonished and amazed he stood,
At the first view ; but soon, a sharp desire
To ply his sabre in that field of blood
And high achievement, set his soul on fire ;
No dull delay can his revengeful ire
Indulge ; already armed in panoply
Of proof, he snatched the helmet from his squire ;
And, " Up, pine here no longer ! " was his cry ;
" This hour it fits us all to conquer or to die ! "

LXXV.

Whether it were that providence divine
This furious spirit breathed in him, to close
That day in one bold stroke for Palestine,
His last lorn glories and her own long woes ;
Or that, as Death drew near, the impulse rose,
In pure despite of his declining star,
Boldly to brave him midst a host of foes,
Rapid as rash, he bid the gates unbar,
And in his awful hand bore out unlooked-for war.

LXXVI.

He waits not, he, to notice if his knights
Obey the call, but rushes out alone ;
Singly a thousand foes he dares, and alights
Their thousand swords, impassive in his own ;
But by his spirit and audacious tone
Inspired, the rest like bacchanals pursue,
And Aladine himself, who on his throne
Was timorous, mean, and base, now reckless grew,
And, less from hope than rage, outrushed, loud shouting too.

LXXVII.

Upon the first he met the' atrocious Turk
His dreadful strokes discharged with such disdain,
And sped so swiftly in his murderous work,
That dead they fall, ere you perceive them slain ;
Quick from the foremost to the last in train —
Voice after voice — the panic of affright
Speeds with the' alarming news, despatched in vain ;
So that the native Christians on the right,
By the loud tumult scared, at once disperse in flight.

LXXVIII.

But with far less discomfit and dismay
The Gascon chivalry maintain their ground,
Although at unawares their mailed array
Was charged, as nearest for the falchion found ;
Never did savage vulture, heaven's wing'd hound,
Nor Alpine wolf, the wood's ferocious lord,
With tooth or talon so acutely wound
Wild-fowl or flock, as the mad Soldan's sword,
Strained in his angry grasp, the Red-cross champions gored.

LXXIX.

Hungry and ravenous, like a living thing,
It seemed to crash their limbs and drink their blood ;
With him the Pagans and their hoary king
Struck down and slaughtered, in their desperate mood,
The still-confused besiegers ; but the good
Count Raymond rushed to where the Soldan slew
His faithful knights ; he fled not, but withstood,
Though well again the red right-hand he knew,
Whose power his anguished frame had still such cause to rue.

LXXX.

Again he fronts him, smites him, falls again,
Struck as before above his closed ventayle ;
The boisterous charge if he could ill sustain,
His old age only bear the blame, too frail
To bide such shocks ; this time too, o'er his pale
Mute form a hundred spears and sabres play,
All eager these to guard as those to' assail ;
But the grim Soldan still holds on his way,
Deeming the warrior dead or else an easy prey.

LXXXI.

Upon the rest he falls, dismembers, maims,
Acts utter wonders on that narrow stage,
Then seeks, by lust allured to loftier aims,
A new arena for his boundless rage.
As one invited by some gentle page
To a brave banquet, from his thrifty board
Hies with delight his hunger to assuage ;
So to a field with ampler victims stored,
Speeds he, on nobler food to flesh his ravenous sword.

LXXXII.

Down through the shattered ramparts he descends,
And with all speed to the grand battle goes,
Leaving disdain and fury with his friends,
And doubt and fear amid his scattered foes ;
These a dire struggle still maintain, and those
Wax bold, the' unfinished victory to complete ;
These yet resist, but their resistance shews
Far fewer signs of triumph than defeat,
And now they quite give way in undisguised retreat.

LXXXIII.

The Gascons slowly face to face give ground,
But the faint Syrians headlong haste away ;
Meanwhile the shout of triumph, the known sound
Of arms, and clamour of the wild affray,
Reached the near spot where wounded Tancred lay ;
Weak as he was, he rose from bed, went out
Upon the roof, and saw with sore dismay
The good Count felled, and all his spearmen stout,
Some in forlorn retreat, and some in utter rout.

LXXXIV.

Courage, which never fails the brave, although
The body droops, droops not, but like a charm,
In lieu of blood and spirits strengthens so
His limbs, that inly fortified from harm,
He binds the ample shield upon his arm,
Nor deems the burden grievous ; grasps his blade,—
His blade unsheathed upon the first alarm,
And thus with weapons instantly arrayed,
(All that a brave man needs), no longer there he stayed.

LXXXV.

But issuing, loudly to the troops he calls,
“ What! do you fly, and leave your lord a prey
To these barbarians? shall their mosques and halls
His arms as trophies of your guilt display?
Go then, return to Gascony, and say,
Say to his son, that from the glorious game
Where his loved father died, you ran away! ”
This said, his weak and naked breast became
To thousand vigorous knights their shelter, and their shame.

LXXXVI.

And with his ponderous shield which seven bull-hides
Composed, a rough material, underlined
With strong impassive plates of steel besides,
By the pure alchemy of fire refined,
From swords, and shafts, and arms of every kind,
That like a drizzly shower around him played,
He guarded the good Raymond, and consigned
To death such numbers with his brandished blade,
That safe the warrior lay as in a silent shade.

LXXXVII.

The brave old Earl, protected thus, resumes,
Awakes, and rises in a little space ;
Whilst a deep feeling of the insult fires
His heart with anger, and with shame his face ;
He darts his quick bright eyes in every place,
On every side, to spy the man whose might
Had on his crest inflicted such disgrace ;
But not perceiving him, he turns with spite
Upon his following troops, the outrage to requite.

LXXXVIII.

Back to revenge alike their Chief's attain
The flying Gascons the next instant pour ;
And now the late so daring crew turns faint,
And boldness reigns where all was fear before ;
He yields who smote, he slays who late forbore
To smite ; he flies, who lately led the chase ;
Well now did Raymond act the matador,
And with a right good earnestness efface,
By full twice fifty deaths, his own most brief disgrace.

LXXXIX.

Whilst striving thus to clear his shamed renown
Upon the most distinguished crests, he spies
Amidst his fighting chivalry, the crown
Of all their strength, and at the Tyrant flies ;
On his helmed head his battle-axe he plies
With a strong arm ; nor from his strokes refrained,
Till with a horrid symphony of sighs
And angry groans the monarch fell, constrained,
And, dying, bit the ground o'er which he lately reigned.

XC.

Their Chiefs thus absent one, and one destroyed,
Divided fates the sad survivors sway ;
Some to distraction by despair annoyed,
Like maddening lions, or wild bulls at bay,
A moment fight, then throw their lives away
On the sword's point ; whilst some bewildered run
Back to the tower ; but with their flying prey
The victors enter too, opposed by none,
And raise their loud huzzas,—the last strong tower is won !

XCI.

Won is the tower, and on the lofty stairs,
Or in the very gates the Moslem fall ;
But Raymond in his grasp ascending bears
The Red-cross flag and plants it on the wall
In sight of either host, a sign to all
Of victory, billowing to the charmed wind ;
But this glad token of the country's thrall
The Soldan marked not,—his tempestuous mind
Had left the assaulted tower and tumult far behind.

XCII.

He treads the moist vermilion field, which grows
With blood and carnage momentarily more red ;
So that it seems the Court where Death bestows
His bannered spoils, and stalks with haughty tread,
Numbering his victims ; as he turns his head,
He sees a warhorse which without its knight
From the thick press with dangling bridle fled ;
On this he lays his ardent hand, leaps light
Into the vacant seat, and spurs it to the fight.

XCIII.

Glorious and potent is the aid, but short,
Which to the faint, sad Saracen he gives ;
A bright, brief thunderbolt—that, swift as thought,
Unlooked-for flashes as the cloud it cleaves,
But of its momentary transit leaves
Eternal furrows ploughed in marble stone ;
Twice fifty warriors he of life bereaves,
But two in Memory's picturing glass alone
Has Time's admiring hand to weeping Pity shewn.

XCIV.

O Edward! O Gildippe! your harsh fate
And noble prowess (if my Tuscan rhymes
May be so happy), will I consecrate
To the fond praises of all lands and climes ;
That so the world, with all its storied crimes,
Your faith, your love, your virtue may revere,
And cite as models for the best of times ;
And that some eyes, to love and feeling dear,
May grace, in solemn verse, your story with a tear.

XCV.

The generous Lady, nobly barbed and mailed,
Rushed where such throngs beneath his sabre died ;
And with two mighty blows the Turk assailed,
One clove his buckler, and one ploughed his side ;
The ruffian knew her by her vests, and cried ;
“ Lo, the white harlot! now by blest Mahound,
It had for thee been better to have plied
The needle still in England, unrenowned,
Than thus with sword and slave to flaunt on foreign ground !

XCVI.

He said; and, filled with all a demon's ire,
At the brave dame a sweeping blow addressed,
Which struck—how could it dare?—her bright attire,
Shattered her mail, and pierced the beauteous breast
Which Love meant only for a tenderer guest;
She drops the reins, and, fainting with the weight
Of pain, seems sinking to her last long rest;
Poor Edward sees, and if he comes too late
For her defence, alas, 't is not his fault, but fate!

XCVII.

What should he do? within his breast at strife
Were rage and pity, with distracting smart
Urging him, this to aid his drooping wife,
And that to stab the murderer to the heart;
Whilst Love, lamenting Love, with both took part,
Nor would that this or that should plead in vain;
Love taught him modes beyond the reach of art,—
With his left hand would he his dear sustain,
And with the right discharge his vengeance and disdain.

XCVIII.

But power was wanting to his will; too weak,
Alas, were they, against so strong a foe!
He neither his fair love could aid, nor wreak
On the fell homicide the wrath which woe
Brought to his heart; ere he could strike a blow,
His guardian arm the savage Infidel
Smote off, and, forced thus harshly to forego
His fond embrace, with her he drooped, he fell,
And falling pressed the form he loved through life so well.

XCIX.

As the tall elm to whose sustaining stem
With all her tendrils clings the bridal vine,
If storms uproot or axe to death condemn,
Drags with itself to ground his darling bine,—
Shattering himself the garlands that enshrine
His mossy boughs, and crushing as he lies
Her pleasant grapes to over-early wine,
He seems to mourn his own sad sacrifice
Less than the faithful plant's that round his ruins dies.

C.

So falls the knight ; and grieves for her alone
 Whom Heaven ordains to be for ever his ;
 Fain would they speak, if only to bemoan
 Each other's pangs, but death denies them this ;
 They commune but with sighs, yet still 't is bliss
 To view each other as in times gone by ;
 Long as they can ~~they~~ gaze, embrace and kiss ;
 At once their pulses cease, at once they die,
 And hand in hand to God their pious spirits fly.

CI.

Fame, spreading quick her pinions for the flight,
 Tells with her thousand tongues the tale to all ;
 Not from vague rumour only, but a knight
 Of special trust Rinaldo learns their fall ;
 At once love, pity, grief, and duty call
 On his resentment for revenge, he flies
 To his proud foe ; but here, to whet his gall,
 The grim Adrastus crosses him, and cries,
 Whilst with his brandished blade the hero he defies :—

CII.

“ Ho ! by sure tokens thou the man must be
 For whose presented sword I burn and pine ;
 All day by title have I called on thee,
 And looked mid thousand shields in vain for thine ;
 Now will I pay my vows, now at the shrine
 Of the sweet saint for whose regards I die,
 Offer thy heart up ; come ! for Palestine,
 Our valour, yea, our fury let us try ;
 Thou art Armida's foe, her sworn avenger I ! ”

CIII.

This said, with two tremendous blows he signed
 His throat and temples gemmed with gold aumale ;
 The helmet he clove not (too well refined),
 But to the pommel made the hero veil
 His plumes ; ah then, nor steel nor snaky scale
 Helps the huge king ; Rinaldo wounds him so,
 He needs no further leech ; wail, Indra, wail
 For thy gigantic son ! a single blow
 Stills his insulting tongue, and lays his proud hopes low.

CIV.

With horror, awe, amazement, and affright,
Cold waxed the hearts of the surrounding crew;
E'en Solyman, who saw the wondrous sight,
Changed in his cheer, and inly trembled too :
And pale his ruby cheek, and nerveless grew
His arm, whilst, prescient of his coming doom,
He knows not what to think or what to do,
A thing in him unusual ; but for whom
Do the stern Fates reverse the issues of their loom ?

CV.

As when in his brief sleep distressful dreams
Afflict the sick man or the madman's brain,
He strives all eagerly to move, and seems
With more than giant force his limbs to strain,
Whilst not a muscle aids his will ; in vain
Are all the mighty efforts he can use ;
Still as the dead his hands and feet remain ;
He would shout out or scream at what he views ;
But not a shout, or scream, or syllable ensues.

CVI.

So would the Soldan rush the knight to meet,
And musters all his forces for the fight,
But feels not in himself his wonted heat,
Scarce knows himself in his diminished might ;
What sparks of ardour his desires excite,
A secret terror chills : yet still desire,
Pride, love of glory, anguish, and despite,
And busy memory in his heart conspire,
So that he neither thinks to fly nor to retire.

CVII.

Whilst unresolved he stands, the knight arrives,
It seems to him with an Immortal's pace,
And with a wrath, a grandeur, that deprives
All mortal wrath and grandeur of their grace ;
Small while he fights : yet, dying, no disgrace
Stains his long glory ; to the last his eye
Glow with the memory of his state and race ;
He shunned no strokes, he heaved no groan or sigh,
Nor did a single thing but what was great and high.

CVIII.

When now the Turk, who in that long crusade
Oft like Antæus fell, to rise again
Each time more fierce and strong, at length had played
His final part, and slumbered with the slain;
Fortune, who fluctuates like the' unstable main,
Hearing the rumour, durst no longer hold
The victory in suspense, but o'er the plain
Stayed her swift wheel, her errant course controlled,
And under Godfrey's flag her influences enrolled.

CIX.

Soon with the rest the kingly squadron flies,
The nerve and flower of all the East, whose name
Was once the' Immortal! mortal now, it lies
Gored with a slaughter fatal to its fame;
But Emireno, seized with generous shame,
Cuts short the standard-bearer's flight, and loud
With indignation sharply makes exclaim;
"Art thou not he whom from a countless crowd
I chose to bear the flag that ne'er in battle bowed?"

CX.

"Stop! 't was not given thee thus to bear away
From Saracen and Frank, from sword and spear;
Canst thou then, craven, see thy chief a prey
To the stern foe, and leave him lonely here?
What seek'st thou? safety? change thy mad career,
The road thou takest leads to death! be true
To the borne Crescent, and renounce thy fear;
He fights who wishes here to live; come, woo
Honour with me, thy prince; her path is safety's too!"

CXI.

Blushing the knight obeyed; with far more stern
And sharp rebukes the other he addressed;
These threats, these blows, that terror makes to turn,
The chief's sharp sabre glittering at his breast;
And rallying thus his bravest and his best,
Fresh wings he forms, and, as the trumpets sound,
Still with fair hopes; his heart above the rest
Bold Tisaphernes cheers, who, though hemmed round,
Fights like a lion yet, nor yields an inch of ground.

CXII.

Wonders that day good Tisaphernes wrought—
The Normans in his wrath he overthrew ;
Scourged the stout Flemings, and, as still he fought,
Young Gernier, Gerard, and De Rosel slew ;
And when by deeds of so divine a hue
He to the measure of eternal fame
His brief existence had prolonged, he flew
At the sublimest risk of all the game,
Like one to whose concern life laid no further claim.

CXIII.

He spied Rinaldo, and though now his shield
Had changed its tincture to a tricolor,
Though the pearl eagle in its sapphire field
With ruby beak and wings was seen to soar,
Known was the proud emblazonry it bore ;
“ And lo ! ” he cried, “ the dragon of the fight !
Heaven nerve my arm to do the deed I swore ;
Let but my blade Armida’s wrongs requite ;
Thine, good Mahmoud, shall be the trophies of the knight ! ”

CXIV.

Thus prayed the Persian, but his prayers were vain,
Mahmoud heard not upon his couch of fire ;
But as a lion, bristling up his mane,
With lashing tail provokes his native ire,
So on the whetstone of his wild desire
His scorn he sharpens, whets his eager zeal,
And, mustering all his strength up for the dire
Assault, coil’d safe behind his shield, his steel
He lifts—and bounds the barb beneath his angry heel.

CXV.

Rinaldo saw him with his sabre raised,
And rushed to meet him in as swift career ;
Far fell the near assailants back, and gazed
On the stern scene, with mingled awe and fear.
Such was the might and fame of either peer,
Such strokes resounded when their weapons crossed,
That each his own strong cause for grief or cheer,
And the whole host of passions that engrossed
His soul—at once forgot, in breathless wonder lost.

CXVI.

That struck alone ; this struck, and wounded, blest
With greater strength and arms more sure and sound ;
With cloven shield, pierced helm, and shattered crest,
The Persian's noble blood distains the ground :
The fair Enchantress sees her champion's wound,
Sees his pierced armour, his half-helmless head,
And, worse, his failing prowess ; gazing round,
She finds the rest disheartened, slain, or fled,
And her own safety hang on fortune's slenderest thread.

CXVII.

Late girt by thousand warriors in the strife,
She now stands lonely in her rubied wain ;
Desperate of victory as revenge, her life
She holds in hate, she dreads the victor's chain,
And straight, 'twixt terror, fury, and disdain,
Her chariot quitting, on a palfrey near
Springs, and takes instant flight,—her only train
Scorn and unconquered love, that in her rear
Hang like two eager hounds behind a hunted deer.

CXVIII.

So in sharp battle fled alone of yore
Scared Cleopatra, leaving to the blade
Of fortunate Augustus, midst the roar
Of waves and weapons, her fond knight betrayed :
And e'en as he, by tenderness o'erswayed,
False to himself and to the world he wooed,
Followed her solitary sails displayed,
So the fond Persian would have fain pursued
His pearl of beauty too, but this the foe withstood.

CXIX.

To the sad Pagan, when his love was lost,
Day seemed to darken and the sunshine fled,
And to the knight who thus his wishes crossed,
He turned enraged, and smote his helmed head ;
More lightly falls to fabricate the red
And writhen thunderbolts, at Jove's behest,
Bronte's vast hammer ; well the weapon sped,—
Its ponderous stroke alighting on his crest,
Made the knight's head bow down benignly to his breast.

CXX.

But soon recovering, in his seat erect
Rinaldo rose, and with his whirling sword
Clove the fine hauberk, 'twixt the ribs direct
Plunged the sharp steel, which in its wrath explored
So deep a passage to the heart it gored,
That far beyond life's citadel it went ;
Entering the breast, the Pagan's back it bored,—
The steel drawn forth, supplied a double vent,
Through which the noble soul took straight its wing'd ascent.

CXXI.

The conqueror paused to contemplate where next
He should his falchion ply, where render aid,—
His foes in all their movements were perplexed,
Their colours struck, and scarce a spear displayed :
Here then his terrible career he stayed,
Curbed in his courser, to the sheath resigned
His sword, his martial ecstasy allayed,
And, calming every passion, called to mind
Armida's helpless plight and destinies unkind.

CXXII.

Her flight he well observed ; mild pity now
Called for his courtesy and gracious cheer,
And the remembrance of his parting vow
To stand her firm and faithful chevalier,
Came o'er his mind, with feelings sweet and dear ;
So that he followed where the dinted ground
Betrayed her goaded palfrey's swift career :
She the meanwhile a dreary glen had found,
Fit place for secret deaths, with cypress compassed round.

CXXIII.

Well pleased she was at heart, that chance should guide
Her wandering steps to so retired a place ;
Here she alighted then, and cast aside
Her bow, her arrows, and their golden case :
"There lie," she murmured "in your deep disgrace,
Unhappy arms! that from the war return
With scarce a spot your mistress to aggrace ;
There buried lie, there rust amidst the fern,
Since to avenge my wrongs you've shewn such small concern !

CXXIV.

"Ah! midst so many weapons could not one
At least return with hostile crimson blest?
If other hearts to you seem marble, shun,
Spare not your points to pierce a woman's breast;
In this mine own, stript naked for the test,
Achieve your triumphs, and your fame restore;
Tender it is, Heaven knows, to wounds impressed
By Love's sharp arrows, Love—who evermore
Strikes wheresoe'er he aims, and hurts the sufferer sore.

CXXV.

"Shew yourselves sharp on me and strong; (your past
Degeneracy I pardon); O poor heart!
Into what straights of fortune art thou cast,
When these alone can peace to thee impart;
But since no other solace to my smart
Remains, none other passport to repose,
Go to! the wounds of this consenting dart
Shall cure the wounds of love,—a few brief throes,
And death shall bring the balm that soothes all earthly woes!

CXXVI.

"Blest, if in dying I bear not with me
This my long plague to pester Hell's foul host;
Hence, Love! come only, dear Disdain, and be
The' eternal partner of my injured ghost!
Or, rising with it from the Stygian coast,
To the false wretch that did me such despite,
In such a whirlwind of resentment post,
With such grim shapes, that all his dreams by night
May be one ceaseless round of agonised affright!"

CXXVII.

She ceased; and, fixt in her intention, drew
The best and sharpest arrow from her case;
Rinaldo reached the wood, and caught a view
Of her mad gesture and disordered pace;
Saw her last act, and with how wild a grace
She to the fatal stroke her soul addressed;
Already death's pale hue o'erspread her face,
When, just in time her purpose to arrest,
The knight stept in behind, and saved her beauteous breast.

CXXVIII.

Armida turned ; and saw, to her surprise,
The knight, for unperceived was his advance ;
Shrieking, she snatched away her angry eyes
From his loved face, and sunk in Passion's trance :
She swooned, she sank, like a sweet flower by chance
Snapt half in two, that, with its bells abased,
Droops on its stem ; he with distracted glance
Upheld her, falling, round her charming waist
Threw his sustaining arm, her clasping zone unbraced ;

CXXIX.

And o'er her snowy breast and face deprived
Of life's warm hues, fond tears of pity shed ;—
As by the summer morning's dew revived,
The fading rose resumes its native red,
So she, recovering, raised her drooping head
And cheek, revived by this celestial rain ;
Thrice her unclosing eyes sought his, thrice fled
The bitter-sweet enchantment, nor again
Would she look up, but blushed 'twixt wrath and warm
disdain.

CXXX.

And with her languid hand would have repelled
The nervous arm by which she was sustained ;
Oft she essayed, but he the faster held,
The more she strove, the more she was enchained :—
Yielding herself at length, like one constrained,
To that dear bond, for still perchance 't was dear,
Despite the scorn she shewed, the hate she feigned,
She sighing thus broke forth, whilst tear on tear
Gushed from the downcast eyes she did not, would not rear.

CXXXI.

“ O ! ever, parting and returning, ever
Cruel alike ! what dark devices guide
Thy movements now ? 't is strange thou shouldst endeavour
To save the life whose strings thou dost divide ;
Thou seek to save me ! to what scorn beside
Am I reserved ? what modes of misery
Am I to suffer next ? no ! no ! thy pride
And traitorous purpose well we know ; but I
Am weak indeed, if e'er I want the power to die.

CXXXII.

"Thy honours truly must be incomplete,
If unsaluted; there must be displayed,
Chained to thy car, or suppliant at thy feet,
A dame, now seized by force, as first betrayed!
This be thy noblest boast: time was, I prayed
To thee for peace and life, now sweet would fate
Prove to my grief,—but ne'er, false renegade,
Kneel I to thee for it! there's not a state
Which, if it were thy gift, I should not hold in hate!

CXXXIII.

"Of myself, traitor! hope I to unloose,
Some way or other, this most wretched frame
From thy fierce tyranny; and if the noose,
Dagger, and drug, and precipice, and flame
Fail thy chained slave, by means as sure my aim,
Thank Heaven, I yet can compass, and defeat
No less thy malice than thy guile; forshame!
Cease thy base flatteries; cease thy false deceit;
How yet he strives with hope my sorrowing soul to cheat!"

CXXXIV.

Thus she laments; and with the floods of tears
Which love and scorn distil from her fair eyes,
A sympathising part his sorrow bears,
Where some chaste sparks of love and pity rise:
And with a voice sweet as the west wind's sighs,
He to her troubled heart speaks peace; "I crave
Thy grace, Armida! calm thyself," he cries;
"Not to be scorned, but crowned, thy life I save;
No foe, but still, yes still, thy champion, yea, thy slave!

CXXXV.

"Mark in my eyes, if you my words alone
Distrust, the fervour of my soul: I swear
Again to seat thee on thy father's throne,
And make thy comfort my peculiar care;
And O, would Heaven, auspicious to my prayer,
Chase from thy mind with its celestial flame
Those mists of Pagan darkness which impair
Its inward grace and beauty, not a dame
In the whole East should match thy glory, power and fame!"

CXXXVI.

Thus does he soothe, thus sue to her ; and so
Tempers his suit with tears, his tears with sighs,
That, like a virgin wreath of mountain snow
When zephyr breathes or sunshine warms the skies,
Her haughty scorn, that wore so stern a guise,
And all her cherished anger melt away,
And milder wishes in their room arise :
“ Behold,” she says, “ thy handmaid ; I obey :
Thy lips my future life, thy will my fortune sway ! ”

CXXXVII.

This while, the’ Egyptian Captain in the strife
Sees his imperial standard fall to ground,
Sees too stout Rimedon deprived of life,
Dispatched by Godfrey in a single wound ;
And all his men, discomfited around,
Dead, or in flight across the boundless plain ;
He in this last sharp act will not be found
Recreant like them, but seeks (nor seeks in vain),
Some noble hand by which he may be nobly slain.

CXXXVIII.

Spurring his steed, he against Godfrey rode,
No worthier foe he knew could be descried ;
And wheresoe’er he passed or came to, shewed
The last brave tokens of despairing pride :
But ere he reached his foe, aloud he cried ;
“ Lo, Chief ! I come to spend my final hour
And hopes with thee ; but yet it shall be tried
If, overpowered, I too cannot o’erpower,
And on my conqueror fall, as falls a thundered tower ! ”

CXXXIX.

This said, they each at each indignant dashed ;
With lifted swords at once they meet, they smite ;
Broken the shield, the vantbrace cleft, and gashed
Is the left shoulder of the Christian knight :
He, on his part, discharged with matchless might
On the left cheek a blow that prostrate laid
The Pagan chief ; and in bewildered plight
As to regain the saddle he essayed,
Through the abdomen thrust, his life-blood bathed the blade.

CXL.

Prince Emirene thus dead, but few remain
Of all that countless host; as he pursued
The vanquished, Godfrey saw, and checked his rein,
How Altamoro on foot, in blood embrued,
With half a sword, and half a helm on, stood,
Breasting a hundred bristling spears, that poured
Round the doomed Prince, whose prowess still they rued;
"Cease, cease," he cried, "SirKnights! and thou, bravelord,
Yield, ('t is Duke Godfrey speaks), yield up thy useless
sword!"

CXLI.

He, who had never till that hour abased
To any act like this his lofty soul,
When now he heard the name which heaven had graced
With such renown from Nubia to the pole,
Yielding his arms, replied; "To thy control
(For thou deserv'st the homage), I my knee
Submit; then midst thy other spoils enrol
The name of Altamoro, who will be
Neither in fame nor wealth a prize unworthy thee.

CXLII.

"The gold and gems of kingdoms shall my kind
And faithful lady grant for my release."
"Heaven has endowed me with a nobler mind,"
Godfrey replied, "than to desire increase
Of earthly treasure; still retain in peace
All that from Ind or Persia swells thy store,
Bocharian mantle, and Tartarian fleece;
I set no price on life; on Asia's shore
I war in Europe's right, not trade in Asian ore!"

CXLIII.

This said, he gives him to his guards to tend,
And after those that fled pursues amain;
These to the rampired camp their lives commend,
Yet thence small respite to their fate obtain;
Soon is it won; the trench is choked with slain,
From gay pavilion to pavilion glide
Streams of warm blood, with whose vermilion stain
Each sumptuous trophy of barbaric pride—
Plumes, coralets, turbans, helms, and shields are deeply
died.

CXLIV.

Thus conquered Godfrey ; and as yet there glowed
A flush of glory in the fulgent West,
To the freed City, the once loved abode
Of Christ, the pious Chief and armies pressed :
Arm'd as he was, and in his sanguine vest,
With all his knights in solemn cavalcade,
He reached the Temple ; there, supremely blest,
Hung up his arms, his bannered spoils displayed,
And at the sacred Tomb his vowed devotions paid.¹⁸

END OF THE TWENTIETH AND LAST CANTO.

L' ENVOI.

I.

FARE thee well, soul of sweet Romance! farewell,
Harp of the South! the stirring of whose strings
Has given, by power of their melodious spell,
Such pleasant speed to Time's else weary wings,
That, rapt in spirit to the Delphic cell,
Midst its green laurels and prophetic springs,
The tuneful labours of past years now seem
A brief indulgence—an enchanted dream.

II.

My pride at noon, my vision of the night,
My hope at morn, my joy at lonely eve!
Now that thy tones of magical delight
Are o'er, do I not well to droop, and grieve?
To what new region shall the muse take flight,
What pictures fashion, what fresh numbers weave,
When all that else had charmed, must now appear
Tame to the eye, and tuneless to the ear?

III.

Much shall I miss thee, when in calm repose
The Summer moon upon my casement shines;
Much, when the melancholy Autumn strows
With leaves, my walk beneath the' o'erarching pines:
Nor less when Spring, 'twixt shower and sunshine, throws
Abroad the sweet breath of her eglantines;
And Winter deepens, with his stormy din,
The quiet charm of the bright hearth within.

IV.

If with no vulgar aim, no selfish view,
 I sought to give thy foreign chords a tongue,
 Let not my hopes all pass like morning dew,
 When on thy cypress bough again thou 'rt hung, *
 But sometimes whisper of me to the few
 I love, the fond, the faithful, and the young;
 And those who reverence the wrong'd soul that planned
 Thy world of sound, with archangelic hand.

V.

Hear how the strings, dear IDA, sound abroad
 The grief and glory of that matchless mind!
 What ardour glows in each seraphic chord;
 How deep a pathos Echo leaves behind!
 Yet was he wretched whom all tongues applaud,—
 For peace he panted, for affection pined:
 Be thou, whilst thy mild eyes with pity swim,
 More kind to me than AURA was to him;—

VI.

Else shall I little prize the' indulgent praise,
 Which some may lavish on a task so long;
 Else shall I mourn that e'er my early days
 Were given to feeling, solitude, and song;
 But thee no light capricious fancy sways,
 To doubt thy truth would be the heavens to wrong;
 Peace to thy spirit with the closing spell!
 And thou, Hesperian Harp, farewell, farewell!

* * * *

* " Tu che ne vai in Pindo,
 Ivi pende mia cetra ad un Cipresso,
 Salutala in mio nome, e dille poi
 Ch' io son dagli anni e da fortuna oppresso."
Rime del Tasso.

VII.

Thus went the verse : and thou art now to me,
All that the cherished Muses were of yore,
And, glassed in other eyes than thine, I see
Fair visions rise, but dimly traced before.
This peaceful home, this garden, where the bee
Hums of Hymettus, and these woods, have more
Of stirring music than those old day-dreams
Of airy fame and praised Pierian streams.

VIII.

To him who lives as Wisdom would require,
As Duty wooes, and as the Virtues claim,
Time, if it robs the Poet of his lyre,
Bestows a bliss beyond the wealth of fame,—
Fruits, that refresh the spirit, and inspire
The' immortal yearning, and that purer flame,
To quicken which, until they blend with heaven,
The mortal Poet and the Lyre were given.

Froxfield,
4th Month 16th, 1830.

NOTES.

CANTO I. STANZA V.

(1) *Rival of Godfrey, hear, and hearing, grasp thine arms.*

The memory of the Crusades, a subject always important to the western nations of Europe, was still very lively at the period when Tasso wrote his "Gerusalemme," and a new expedition of that kind was planned by Gregory XIII., who ascended the pontifical chair in 1572. From this stanza, it is evident that the poet thought a new crusade not improbable; and he, perhaps, did not despair of himself gaining laurels in the Holy Land. The mutual jealousy of the Christian princes, however, rendered nugatory the Pontiff's attempts, and Tasso's appeal to the martial spirit of Alphonso served only to exhibit his own zeal.

CANTO I. STANZA LIV.

(2) *Roger, of Barneville surnamed, renown
And ancient story with the noblest class.*

The "Ruggier di Balnavilla" of Tasso has been identified by my friend, M. de Gerville, of Valognes, and on unquestionable grounds, with the ancestor of the Russell family in England. Roger, one of the sons of Hugh de Rosel, who came over with the Conqueror, was lord of the two fiefs of Barneville and Rozel, on the western coast of Lower Normandy, and he is celebrated by all those writers on the First Crusade, whose histories are published in the "Gesta Dei per Francos," and whom Tasso is well known to have diligently consulted. From a charter preserved in the "Neustria Pia," it appears that (probably to fit himself out for the expedition to the Holy Land), he sold to the

Abbot of St. Stephen's in Caen, his fief at Rosel, near that city,* for 15*l.*, by consent of his son Robert, and of his capital lord, Robert, Duke of Normandy; in whose company he went, first to Constantinople, by way of Bulgaria. In the night irruption of Solyman, or Kilidge Arslan, whilst the Croises were besieging Nice, he was foremost in repelling the attack, "rushing," says Albert of Aix, (p. 267), "in the midst of the conflict, with lightning-like strokes, and the swiftness of a war-horse, amidst the clash of spears and ringing of swords and helmets." He distinguished himself equally in the ambush before reaching Antioch, (p. 225), again, as one of the standard-bearers, fighting bravely at the bridge of Antioch, (p. 226), and was the second to scale the tower of that city, when betrayed by Phiro: z. But that was the last of his successful exploits upon record. On the first appearance of the advanced guard of the vast Persian army that was marching to reconquer the city, his eager valour led him to sally, with fifteen other knights, from the gates, and he was lured by the flying foe into an ambuscade in a neighbouring valley. Observing the great number of his assailants, he sought to regain the city, but was mortally wounded by an arrow, as he crossed the fords of the Pharphar, (p. 248). Tasso makes him fall by the hand of the Persian Tisaphernes. His head was struck off by the barbaric foe, fixed upon a spear, and borne in triumph to the General Kerboga, the Argantes of Tasso. But the gallant Tancred undertook to revenge the loss of his slain friend; and in his first conflict with the foe, returned to the city with six heads of Infidels whom he had slain, raised aloft on spears, in stern retaliation. The body of De Barneville was borne with weeping and lament to Antioch, and interred in the vestibule of the Church of St. Peter, "the Croises mourning for his loss as one of the bravest of the people; and the Bishop of Puy and the whole clergy of the camp, commending with hymns and solemn psalms his soul to Christ, for the love of whom he became an exile and scrupled not to die."—*Albert*, p. 248.

CANTO I. STANZA LV.

(3) *That shield whereon the snake devours a naked child.*

Otho was the first of the family of the Visconti, afterward Dukes of Milan, who have continued the armorial bearing assumed by their ancestor, from his conquest of a Saracen warrior in single combat, viz. *argent*, a serpent wreathed in pale, *azure*, crowned *or*, devouring an infant *gules* or *proper*.

* There was a third fief of the same name, belonging to the family, in the Isle of Jersey, opposite to the bay of Rozel, in La Manche, and the three-hamlets are still existing.

CANTO I. STANZA LX.

- (4) *A flight well fit some young enthusiast
In after days should follow, who would win
The like renown.*

The reference in this passage has been wholly mistaken by the commentators who have touched upon it. Paul Beni considered it as some allusion to Achilles, to whose story it bears no manner of application. The truth is, it was intended as a compliment to Alphonso, who, as we are told by Muratori, (*Ant. Est.* vol. ii. p. 380), when a youth under twenty, went out one day on the pretence of hunting, passed into the Venetian territories, and thence fled into France, accompanied by five gentlemen. His design, he said, was to see the world, and be present at the wars in that country. Henry II., his cousin-german, made him captain of a hundred men-at-arms, and he was engaged in several conflicts with the Spaniards. His flight took place in May, 1552, and he returned to Ferrara at the end of September, 1554.

CANTO III. STANZA XXXIII.

- (5) *Dexterous the darted balls on nimble feet to shun.*

This simile alludes to the game of caroselli, introduced into Italy by the Moors; but I have in vain sought, in a variety of authors, for a particular description of it.

CANTO III. STANZA XXXVII.

- (6) *Where the bird argent spreads its plumes for flight.*

An eagle *argent* in a field *azure*, the armorial bearings of the House of Este.

CANTO IV. STANZA LXXXIII.

- (7) *From her divine lips glides a golden chain,
That winds to her dear will who most those tears disdain.*

The ancients feigned that many chains of gold proceeded from the tongue of Hercules, wherewith the ears of barbaric nations were bound; the fable, says one of the commentators on Tasso, was designed to shew the humanizing spirit of eloquence. As illustrative of the subject, it is worthy of remark, that in the Duke of Bedford's collection of engravings is a curious French print, after Raphael, entitled, "*L'Eloquence*," representing the Gallic Hercules surrounded by various figures, to whose ears chains in many directions are represented as passing from his lips.

CANTO XI. STANZA VIII.

- (8) ————— *whose gentle pleas*
Win now thy new successor to unlock
The gracious gates of pardon and of peace.

The poet, in these verses pays a passing compliment to the Catholic liberality of Pope Gregory XIII., who, during the jubilee in the summer of 1575, granted a general indulgence to the Roman people. The earnest desire which Tasso had to be a sharer in what he considered as so great a spiritual advantage, is cited by his biographers as one of the principal motives for his visit to Rome at that particular period; and indeed whilst there, he uniformly spent his mornings in visiting the churches, and in performing those acts of piety which are prescribed for the purpose of receiving a plenary indulgence.

CANTO XII. STANZA LXXVII.

- (9) *Whilst hell's pursuing fiends are ever howling nigh!*

This stanza, it may be amusing to mention, was cited by "the self-torturing Sophist," in one of his almost frenzied moods, as an absolute prophecy of his own misfortunes. "'Do you know,' said Rousseau to M. Corancey, suddenly starting from one of those fits of abstraction which this gentleman used to regard as the inevitable prelude to some extravagant proposition, 'do you know why I give Tasso so decided a preference?'—'No, but it is not difficult to conjecture. Tasso, uniting to the most brilliant imagination the good fortune to have lived after Homer and Virgil, has profited of the beauties of both those great poets, and avoided their defects.'—'There is something in that,' said Rousseau; 'but do you know that he has predicted my misfortunes?' 'I made a movement,' says Corancey, 'he stopped me'—'I understand you,' continued he, 'Tasso has come before my time—how could he foretell my misfortunes? I know not how, probably he knew not himself; but, in fine, he has predicted them. Have you remarked that Tasso has this peculiarity, that you cannot take from his work a single stanza, nor from any stanza a single line, nor from any line a single word, without disarranging the whole poem, so precisely and curiously is it put together. Very well; take away the stanza I speak of—the text does not suffer, it remains perfect; the stanza has no connexion with those that precede or follow it—it is absolutely useless. We must presume that Tasso wrote it involuntarily, and without comprehending it himself—but there it is,' said he, pointing out the wonderful verse."

CANTO XIV. STANZA XIX.

- (10) *Your blood shall mix, and from that union spring
A glorious issue, dear to all mankind!*

Tasso in these verses makes allusion to the marriage of Francis of Lorraine, Duke of Guise, with Anne of Este. Serassi, however, will have them to be nothing less than a prophecy of the gifted poet, and in the courtly dedication of his work to Maria Beatrice of Este, signifies, that they bear reference to her marriage with the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria! "The commentators of our poet," he pompously observes, "deserve to be pardoned, if none of them has understood and explained this most important passage; since, in their times, the prediction had not yet been accomplished. But it is my happy fortune to be the first to explain it to the world, and, at the same time, to congratulate your royal highness and Italy, on the felicity which is predicted to both in your glorious descendants. And, in truth, if the prophecy of the poet has been already fulfilled in that part of it which seemed the most remote and difficult, there is no reason to doubt that its accomplishment will be complete."

CANTO XIV. STANZA XLII.

- (11) *Her gloomy Dives and Afrits to compel.*

In deference to critical opinion, I have altered all other allusions to the Mahometan Mythology.

CANTO XIV. STANZA LXXIV.

- (11*) *Mirth overpowers the man, he laughs, and laughing dies.*

Pomponius Mela speaks of such a fountain, as existing in the Fortunate Islands;—*Una singulari duorum fontium ingenio maximè insignis: alterum qui gustavere, risu solvuntur in mortem.*—Lib. iii. cap. 10.

CANTO XV. STANZA XV.

- (12) *Not distant, trees o'er waving trees appear
To clothe a hill embrowning all the deep
That bathes its base.*

Mount Cæsius.

CANTO XV. STANZA XXXII.

- (13) *These shall suffice to make thy memory long
In history's page endure, or some divinest song.*

Tasso having been proved above to be a *vates* in both senses of the word, I will indulge the fancy of supposing that he here makes

allusion to "the Voyage of Columbus" of my friend Mr. Rogers, the chastest and most tasteful of all modern poets, whose writings, often as I read them, seem always fraught with new graces, and a yet more classical charm. From the beautiful fragments which he has given us on this interesting subject, the happy selection of his imagery, which is always highly poetical, and his perfect familiarity with all that the Spanish chroniclers relate of the adventure, it is easy to perceive with how finished a poem he might have enriched the world, had he put forth all the powers of his mind, and filled up the outline which he has so well designed. Imperfect as this is, it resembles in value some of those free and spirited sketches from the pencils of the great masters of painting, which are to be met with in the portfolios of their most passionate admirers.

CANTO XVI. STANZA XV.

(14) *Now, now, whilst 't is youth, pluck the roses of love!*

As it is possible the change of measure here introduced may meet with some objectors, I affix a translation of the song in the stanza of Spenser, although it is somewhat perilous to attempt it after him. Vide his Description of the Bower of Bliss, in the "Faery Queen," canto xii. stanzas lxxiv. lxxv.

"Ah see," she sang, "the bashful blushing rose
Spread through green leaves its bosom to the light;
Half bud, half blossom yet, through dew it glows,
And charms the more, the more it shuns the sight!
Ah see how boldly soon it courts the bright
And burning sun; how soon it droops and fades;
Nor seems the same rich blossom of delight
Desired so much in songs and serenades,
By thousand amorous youths and thousand blooming maids!

"So passes, in the transit of a day,
Of mortal life the verdure and the bloom,
Nor will the sunshine of a second May
The leaf re-open; or the flower relume;
Gather the rose then in its rathe perfume
And morning beauty, ere the skies above
O'ercast the landscape with funereal gloom;
Whilst, loved and loving, none the bliss reprove,
Now, whilst it yet is youth, pluck, pluck the rose of love!"

CANTO XVI. STANZA XXXV.

(15) *Meanwhile Armida, by the regal gate
Starts to behold her savage keeper dead.*

As Tasso makes no previous allusion to this guard of the

palace, the passage may seem to need some explanation. The truth is, there was introduced into the first edition of the poem, at the close of the 15th Canto, a combat between this warder and the knights, which the author's good taste probably led him afterwards to omit. This allusion he seems either to have overlooked, or to have purposely left the incident of the conflict to the imagination of the reader.

CANTO XVIII. STANZA XXX.

- (16) *A rude Silenus oft the days of old
Have seen unclothe, and yield some Goddess fair.*

Già nel' aprir d'un rustico Sileno,
Meraviglie vedea l'antica etade;
Ma quel gran Mirto da l' aperto seno,
Imagini mostrò più belle e rade.

I confess myself indebted to Dr. Black for the correct rendering of this obscure passage, which has much perplexed all the former translators of Tasso. In his appendix to the Poet's Life, vol. i. p. 336, he has devoted some pages to its illustration, and not unhappily ridicules the versions hitherto given of it.

The real explanation is to be found in a passage of Plato, of whose writings Tasso was always an ardent admirer. Towards the end of the "Symposium," Alcibiades says, that just as rough cases in the forms of Satyrs and Sileni are covers to protect admirably sculptured or carved Statues of Divinities, so the language and metaphors used by Socrates are often so coarse as to lead ordinary hearers to think he is an ignorant and unpolished man; whereas, if you look beneath the outward form of his expressions, and dive into the real, though veiled meaning of his discourse, you will find them to contain the most precious truths of human and divine things. We learn from this, that it was a frequent custom with the Greeks, to enclose their most admirable statues in images of Sileni, for the purpose of preserving them, and partly perhaps to set off by contrast the wonderful grace of the included divinity.

CANTO XIX. STANZA CIV.

- (17) ——— *She stept not, no, she darted from her seat!*

There is a tradition that Tasso had never been able to express the velocity with which Erminia descends from her palfrey in this interesting scene, until one day, whilst walking with some friend on the bank of the Tiber, he saw a young man, who was

advancing at full gallop, fall from his horse. Whereupon he is said to have immediately burst forth with the admirable line,

Non scese, nè, precipitò da sella :

The spirit of which I flatter myself I have preserved, as well as the genius of our language and of the Alexandrine will admit.

CANTO XX. STANZA CXLIV.

(18) *And at the sacred Tomb his vowed devotions paid.*

I cannot close the pages of this enchanting poem, without expressing my admiration of the character of Godfrey as it is delineated by Tasso. Tancred and Rinaldo are doubtless the general favourites, but Godfrey is recommended to my fancy as the perfect model of a patriotic general. He always appears to us in the most amiable light, no less by his private deeds than by his public actions. He is uniformly dignified, virtuous, generous, and humane. To the general wish of his Barons he yields gracefully, as a ruler ought ; but he is firm in high emergencies, in repressing disaffection and the pride of hostile embassies. His uniform devotion never reduces him to a tame level with the "pious Eneas" of Virgil :—he is like a lion in the battle : when all his knights seem to decline the combat with Argantes, he is ready himself to meet him as a private soldier ; as a private soldier he fights in the first assault on Jerusalem, beats back Solyman in his midnight slaughter of the camp, defies him on the battlements, which he is the third to scale, kills Emireno, the Egyptian leader, and in the universal slaughter that ensues, sets the crowning charm upon his heroic character, by saving from the fury of his knights the death-devoted Prince of Samarcand. In a word, he always speaks and acts exactly as he ought, 'nor,' like the dying Solyman, 'does a single thing but what is great and high.' It is a fresh source of pleasure in the contemplation of his character, that Tasso's representation of his virtues has all the truth of history. Mr. Mills observes, that in him 'the gentlest manners were united to the firmest spirit ; the amiableness of virtue to its commanding gravity. He was alike distinguished for political courage and for personal bravery. His lofty mind was capable of the grandest enterprises. His deportment was moral ; his piety was fervent. He regretted the stern necessity which drew him from the immediate service of God ; but when in arms, he was a hero ; and his martial zeal in the cause of Heaven was always directed by prudence, and tempered by philanthropy.'* In proof of his unfeigned piety, it-

* History of the Crusades, vol. i. pp. 83, 84.

should never be forgotten, that whilst, under the mask of religion, his brother Baldwin gratified his worldly ambition, Bohemond his pride, and Raymond his avarice, the Duke of Lorraine, faithful to his first simple wish of becoming the defender and advocate of the holy sepulchre, and pressed as he was by the voice of all the Croises, refused to wear a diadem in the city where his Saviour had worn a crown of thorns.* His tomb was watered not only by the tears of his friends, but was honoured by the lamentations of many of the Moslems, whose affection his virtues had conciliated. The church of the holy sepulchre received his ashes, and to the present day his tomb may be seen, bearing the following brief inscription :

HIC JACET INCLYTUS DUX GODEFRIDUS DE BULION, QUI
TOTAM ISTAM TERRAM ACQUISIVIT CULTUI CHRISTIANO;
CUJUS ANIMA REGNET CUM CHRISTO. AMEN.

There too are seen the spurs of the hero, and that long and formidable sword, which in his hands, on the bridge of Antioch, clove in twain a gigantic Saracen from the helmet to the waist.

Turning for a moment from the Champion to the Poet of the Cross, I cannot refrain from observing, that in no point is Tasso's superiority to Virgil more observable than in the skill with which he portrays his characters, and the individuality and interest with which he supports them to the close. My preference of Tasso to Virgil will perhaps be deemed quixotic by some ; but in the teeth of Boileau and of Addison, I will not scruple to maintain, that the "Gerusalemme" of Tasso is both in action and in plan a far more successful production as an epic poem, than the Eneid of Virgil, admirable as this unquestionably is in the polished elegance of its phrase, and the music and mechanism of its numbers. This, however, is a question not to be discussed in the short compass of a note ; and I will end the present passing comment on his merits by the following graceful sonnet, with which I have been honoured from the elegant pen of the Archdeacon Wrangham, than which I could scarcely desire a more appropriate conclusion :—

* History of the Crusades, vol. i. p. 266.

INSCRIPTION FOR A BUST OF TASSO.

From the Italian of Matthias.

Here in these groves, of every Muse the haunt,
By Life's rough tempests shattered and oppressed,
Torquato from his toils aspired to rest,
And in their sheltering bowers, lone habitant,
Has found safe refuge. Here their magic quire
Still the sweet Sirens hold, and by the side
Of echoing streams, the swan in stately pride
Nests mid the strings of the melodious lyre.
Then, Stranger, whether from the icy Pole,
Buoyant of heart, or where the blazing noon
Scorches swart Afric's race, thou sojourn'st here,
To this bright marble bow thy reverent soul,
And o'er the bust of sweet Sorrento's son,
Strew pious flowers, and shed the holy tear.

THE END.



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